



REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

The U.S. Solar-Plus-Storage Industry Landscape:
Wages, Career Paths, and Diversity/Equity/Inclusion in 2022

CLOSING DATE AND TIME: June 3, 2022 - 4:00 P.M. EST

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Introduction

The Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) and the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) are committed to creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive industry where everyone is welcomed, supported, respected, and valued. Our organizations are committed to incorporating principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice in all aspects of our work in order to promote the equitable distribution of the health and economic benefits of clean energy and support the creation and growth of a diverse and inclusive clean energy industry.

In a partnership agreement, IREC and SEIA seek to identify a research team to design and conduct a comprehensive survey of the solar and storage industry workforce, with two main areas of focus: 1) diversity, equity, and inclusion and 2) wages and career paths. The survey follows up on the 2019 *U.S. Solar Industry Diversity Study* and the annual *National Solar Jobs Census*.

IREC and SEIA anticipate that the study will form the basis of actionable recommendations for recruitment and retention, with added insights and examples of activities to help promote employee advancement, improve training, and encourage other opportunities for employers to support an inclusive workplace culture.

Following this solicitation, SEIA and IREC will follow up with a short list of firms for further discussion and a formal proposal.

Minority-, women- or veteran- owned enterprises are encouraged to apply. We are committed to diversity and inclusion in our vendor selection and acknowledge the importance of diverse voices and perspectives. Applicants shall not be discriminated against because of race, religion, sex, national origin, ethnicity, age, disability, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, color, marital status, medical conditions, or any other protected characteristic under applicable law.

Project Description

This study will assess the state of diversity, equity, and inclusion across the solar and storage industry through interviews, surveys, or third-party data on solar industry employers and employees. A second, equally important part of the study will cover existing wages and career paths in the solar and storage industry.

The study will cover topics such as:

- Employee demographics (i.e. self-identifying gender, race and ethnicity, LGBTQ+, veteran status), reported by occupational categories
- Detailed and credible data on wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement, reported by occupational category, experience level, demographics, union membership, and other relevant factors
- Career pathways, including how people come to the industry and how they progress through the ranks
- Educational and training requirements for employees
- Employee job satisfaction and inclusivity of workplace culture
- Opportunities for mentorship and career development
- Corporate diversity and inclusion practices, policies and tracking or metrics
- Recruitment strategies

Anticipated deliverables include:

1. A study methodology for quantifying current solar and storage workforce data, including clarification as to how the research methodology and related data sources would both leverage and expand upon present reports and datasets.
2. Data and analysis on workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion and wages and career paths, as described in the bullets above. IREC and SEIA will use this data to prepare a written report.

Additional deliverables may be defined through the interview and negotiation process.

This study will follow up and expand on information published in the 2019 [U.S. Solar Industry Diversity Study](#) and the annual [National Solar Jobs Census](#) (which will be updated in summer 2022). The applicant is strongly encouraged to review both reports to understand the background of this proposal. These previous reports provide industry-leading data and insights on employment numbers, demographics, education requirements, wages, and career advancement. However, the previous studies also have notable limitations that we would like this new research to address. For example, they did not include a detailed breakdown of wages by occupational category or demographics. In addition, the *U.S. Solar Industry Diversity Study* surveys had a relatively low sample size, which we would like to see improved. We are welcoming additional proposals from applicants on how to expand on and improve our previous research, including the potential to leverage publicly available wage data to enrich the dataset.

Statement of Qualifications Format and Requirements

Responses to this RFQ should be formatted as a single document in pdf format.

Required Sections:

1. Introductory Letter (maximum 2 pages) – a letter of interest indicating why the firm is interested and qualified to perform services.

2. Qualifications of Respondent (maximum 5 pages) – the responding firm shall provide summary background information about the firm. Section should include:

a. Team qualifications detailing the following:

i. A statement confirming available staff and resources to complete this work in 2022.

ii. Indicate the firm's approach to this project. Describe your approach, including recommended research methodology, potential to leverage existing or third-party data, data security, and policies in place to protect confidentiality.

iii. Qualifications of any external partners and consultants.

iv. Applicable licenses or certifications.

3. Proposed Project Staff (maximum 5 pages) - provide a statement that identifies the key personnel, including the project manager and primary contact, for the study. Provide resumes that specify the qualifications and related experience of each member of the proposed project team.

4. Employment and workforce research experience or knowledge relating to wage data collection and diversity, equity, and inclusion (Maximum 4 Pages) – This section should detail the firm's experience and/or knowledge conducting a) research on industry wage data broken down by demographics and occupation; b) workforce diversity and the relation of demographics to wages; and c) equity and inclusion by place (such as a job center, community, or institution). Please explain what instruments or methods your firm employs to deliver objective data. The firm should also outline or briefly note anticipated challenges to performing this form of research.

5. Proposed outline of a research project (Maximum 3 pages). Please provide a **high-level** outline of the project you would conduct in order to meet our requirements. We are not asking for a formal proposal, but rather a brief overview of what the project would entail. This should include:

a) a list of key tasks you would complete (these can be in bullet form).

b) Research methods you would use to complete the tasks (for example, a survey of employees)

c) Estimated cost range for each task (these costs can be approximate and do not represent a bid price)

5. Comparable projects (Maximum 3 Pages) – The responding firm shall provide short descriptions of comparable projects within the past 5 years; each project listed must include a reference. Comparable experience should describe at a minimum:

- a. Project scope
- b. Firm's role (primary, subconsultant, etc.) and project manager
- c. Project reference with current contact information (phone and email address)

Selection Process Overview

A selection committee will evaluate and score all applications received prior to the published deadline. Selection will be based on four equally rated criteria: demonstrated experience, technical expertise, team composition/staffing, and overall approach and methodology.

Depending upon the recommendations of the Selection Committee, SEIA and IREC may interview a short list of respondents this summer and enter into a contract by August 2022 at the latest. Once a candidate is selected, SEIA and IREC will work with the recipient to define the scope and work plan.

Instructions for Submittal of Statement of Qualifications (SOQ)

Qualification packages must be submitted via email no later than Friday, June 3, 2022 (4:00 p.m. EST deadline).

Questions may be submitted via email to admin@IRECUSA.org. Responses to all questions will be posted publicly on this page: <https://irecusa.org/about-irec/careers-and-opportunities/request-for-qualifications-the-u-s-solar-plus-storage-industry-landscape-wages-career-paths-and-diversity-equity-inclusion-in-2022/>.

By submission of your letter of interest and qualification statements in response to this announcement, you are certifying that neither your firm nor any of its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or excluded from participation in this procurement process by any federal department or state agency, or other governing body. Further, if such a debarment or suspension occurs during the course of the procurement, you shall so inform IREC and SEIA.

No submitting firm shall, directly or indirectly, engage in any conduct (other than the submission of the RFQ or other prescribed submissions and/or presentations before the Selection Committee) to influence any employee or affiliated individual of IREC and SEIA concerning award of a contract as a result of this solicitation. Violation of this prohibition may result in disqualification of the firm from further participation in the solicitation for services or goods sought herein, or from participation in future IREC and SEIA solicitations or contracts.