**Westchester Power Community Choice Aggregation**

**Request For Information**

**July 7, 2020**

**PURPOSE**

Sustainable Westchester (SW) serves as the administrator for Westchester Power (WP), the first Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) program in New York State. SW is a 501(c)(3) non-profit whose membership consists of 44 municipalities in Westchester County and the County itself, representing more than 330,000 households and small businesses.

The Westchester Power program was launched in April of 2016 with 20 SW municipal participating members. The program initially included 16 communities in Consolidated Edison (Con Edison) service territory and 4 in the New York State Gas & Electric (NYSEG) territory (one community is in both). Currently, there are 27 participating municipalities, 5 of which are in the NYSEG service territory. The aggregate usage in the current NYSEG communities over the one-year period from July 2019 to June 2020 is approximately 100 million kWh. Under the current contract, approximately 70% of the total NYSEG load is 100% renewable via NYS RECs.

The existing contract for the municipalities in the NYSEG utility territory will expire on November 30, 2020. SW will issue an RFP at the end of July 2020 for the follow-on contract, which will start December 1, 2020. See contract schedule below.

The purpose of this RFI is to identify the suppliers (ESCOs) that are willing and able to submit a bid and can reliably serve the WP aggregation under the guidelines set by the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) and SW.

The forthcoming RFP will solicit for two product types, a standard grid supply that meets the NYS minimum renewable requirements for load serving entities, and a NY State qualified 100% renewable product. The WP program is based on fixed rates, and as such, we will be requesting fixed rates that will include energy, transmission, capacity, transmission and distribution losses, RPS charges, imbalances, load factor adjustments, congestion charges, ancillary services, and applicable taxes. No pass-through will be allowed.

**RFI RESPONSE**

**Responses will be accepted through July 21, 2020 and should be emailed to:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Dan Welsh, Program Director | dan@sustainablewestchester.org |
| Jasmine Graham, Program Manager | jasmine@sustainablewestchester.org |
| Steven Rosenthal, Interim Executive Director | Steve@sustainablewestchester.org  |

The contracting process will follow the following schedule.

**2020 Westchester Power NYSEG Contract Schedule**

* RFI: July 1 - July 27
* RFP: July 31 - August 21
* Contracts signed & post-contract meetings: August 22 - September 30
* Mailing Prep: September 23 - October 2
* Notification Letters Mailed: October 4, 2020
* Opt Out Period: October 9 - November 8
* Enrollment Data Submitted: November 8 - November 30
* Rolling Enrollments Beginning December 1, 2020

The Westchester Power Electric Supply Agreement format is posted at:

**https://sustainablewestchester.org/wp/bids-2020-nyseg-rfp/**

Questions are welcome and answers deemed to be applicable to the RFI as a whole will be posted at the above link as well. The contract template closely follows our current contract, updated for context (continuation of current operation). It has been accepted by our municipal participants, and we therefore do not have the flexibility to make material changes Respondents are nevertheless welcome to submit comments

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **BASIC COMPANY INFORMATION** |  |
| Company Name:  |  |
| Principal Address: |  |
| Submittal Contact Person: |  |
| Contact Phone:  |  |
| Contact Fax:  |  |
| Contact Email: |  |
| Contact Address: |  |
| Company Website:  |  |
| Business Type (C-Corp, S-Corp, Partnership, etc.): |  |
| Describe your company’s organization structure including parent, affiliate and subsidiary companies (if any): |  |
| New York Office Address (if any): |  |

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

(Supplementary attachments for the questions below are encouraged).

**Authority To Supply**

1. Is your company registered to serve both residential and commercial customers in NYSEG service territory?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

2. Has your company completed the EDI Testing process provided by NYSEG?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

 **Fixed price format**

3. Is your company willing and able to offer a full-requirements fixed price?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

4. SW intends to ask for an “opt in” day/night time-of-use rate from bidders, which may offer additional weighting in bid evaluation if such offers are found to enhance the overall product offerings. Is your company willing and able to offer a day/night time-of-use rate option? Please describe.

5. All pricing will include energy, transmission, capacity, transmission and distribution losses, RPS charges, imbalances, load factor adjustments, congestion charges, ancillary services, and applicable taxes.

 Concur? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

**Power and Renewable Energy**

6. Please indicate any and all physical electric generation assets that are owned and or controlled by your company. Indicate whether ownership and/or control are within your organization or a parent organization. If you do not intend to use your own generation, explain how your power will be sourced and your qualifications for trading electric contracts.

*In March of 2018, the NY Public Service Commission clarified that renewable energy products offered by CCAs must comply with the environmental attribute and delivery rules of the PSC’s Environmental Disclosure Program.*

7. Please indicate your capability to serve a large number of “green” customers, including your procedure for buying and registering RECs so that individual communities which select the renewable energy default are credited for this in NY Environmental Disclosure Program reporting.

8. Please indicate if your company sees benefit in and would like to offer to buy directly or wheel in all necessary renewable power without using RECs?

**Experience**

9. Indicate how many years you have been in the electric supply business. List all states in which you are currently licensed to supply electric generation (if applicable). What year did your company begin selling electricity to retail customers in the U.S.? In NY State?

10. List any CCA Programs that you have served or are currently serving.

11. Please include information on the number of residential accounts currently served through CCA programs. Please list the estimated number of accounts served, broken down by state and by year. Preference may be given to ESCOs with significant previous CCA experience.

12. Please provide five (5) CCA references. Include the name, address, contact person and phone number of each community. Briefly describe the product or service provided to each community.

**Financial ability to undertake**

*The financial strength and stability of the potential supplier are key evaluation criteria.Please provide sufficient evidence to support this review, such as:*

13. Is your company a publicly traded firm?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

14. If not, please provide three consecutive years of audited financial statements. (These will be treated with confidentiality and not released to any third party).

15. Has your company or its affiliates ever defaulted or threatened to default on a contract in the municipal aggregation space?

16. If an affiliate, do you have a Parental Guarantee from the parent company that is sufficient to cover the exposure of your portfolio with this buying group added?
Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

17. Is your company’s Debt considered investment grade by a major credit agency?

18. What is the rating of your company’s or parent company’s long-term unsecured debt?

\_\_\_\_ Moody’s \_\_\_\_ Standard & Poor’s

19. Has your company filed for bankruptcy in the past three years?

 Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

**Data and mailing costs**

20. Under the “Order Establishing Community Choice Aggregation Data Access Fees” issued December 14, 2017 utilities may charge $0.16 per customer for aggregated data and $0.84 for detailed eligible customer data they supply to CCAs. The selected ESCO will be responsible for these utility costs.

Concur? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

21. The selected ESCO will be responsible for all costs associated with the duplication and mailing of the opt-out notices. The selected ESCO may also be responsible for administering the opt-out process.

Concur? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

**Customer Service Operations**

*WP maintains a customer service operation for first-line phone customer interaction. Many of the questions that come in concern the basic nature of the program, the participation of the municipality, opt-in and opt-out processes, green energy, etc., and we find that our familiarity with the local backdrop and program history is an advantage in those dialogues. In the event that inquiries go beyond this basic information and are more appropriately handled by the ESCO, we pass the customer on to the ESCO. The selected ESCO will be required to provide full customer service capability, including its own 800 number.*

22. Describe your customer service resources and systems. In what countries are your call centers? Where is your primary call center located? What are its hours of operation?

23. Describe your process for handling billing inquiries or disputes. Please provide an average timeframe for answering requests for billing inquiries and number of inquiries handled in an average month.

24. The CCA program is different than traditional retail ESCO business in significant ways. How will you ensure that your customer service staff are knowledgeable about the program?

25. ESCO and CCA rules require that Limited English Proficient (LEP) customers be provided program information and are generally served in their native languages. Please describe your capabilities and processes for non-English translation and interpretation.

**CCA Enrollment**

26. The PSC Order governing CCAs sets out the requirements for the opt-out process. The selected ESCO will execute the opt-out mailings in coordination with SW. The opt-out package shall include an environmental disclosure statement, a frequently asked questions sheet, and terms and conditions along with the opt-out letter itself. The initial notification mailing shall be mailed so as to allow for transition by customers to the new contract on the first meter read after January 1, and after: a) the contract between the selected ESCO and the Municipality has been signed, and b) the ESCO has been provided the customer mailing list. The mailing list will be comprised of current customers plus the customer lists for the two new municipalities obtained from the utility.

Concur? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

27. The utility is preparing “New Customer” files for residents who move into the member community during the term of the supply agreement on a quarterly basis. The selected ESCO shall process these files to filter out customers that had previously opted out of the program and any other ineligible accounts, and execute the opt-out mailing and enrollment process for these.

Concur? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

28. At the end of the term of this agreement, if the agreement has not been renewed, the ESCO will return all participating customers to the utility.

 Concur? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

29. Customers will have the right to opt out at any time with no exit fee.

Concur? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

30. Customers will have the right to switch between the two supply options at any time with no fee.

Concur? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

**Taxes and compliance with applicable laws**

31. Your company will be responsible for ensuring that all federal, state and local laws are followed.

Concur? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

32. Your company will be responsible for fulfilling all requirements necessary to conduct business in the individual member communities’ service territory.

Concur? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

33.Your company will be responsible for collecting and remitting all applicable taxes, including local gross receipts tax.

Concur? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

**Additional energy and cost saving measures**

34. CCAs offer a unique opportunity to introduce customers to energy saving and other related value added products. Please describe any such products and services that you currently market to your CCA or retail customers and which, if any, of those products and services you feel might be of benefit to our customers and would like to offer.

35. The ESCO will quote a rate with capacity obligation that will be delineated. If the capacity obligation beneficially changes through active load management the ESCO will alter its capacity charge and promote that benefit to the aggregation.

Concur? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

**Data Systems, Provision of Data**

36. Please confirm your Electronic Data Interchange computer network is fully functional at all times and includes backup file saving systems, and is capable of handling NYSEG’s residential and small commercial retail electric customers for this aggregation.

Confirm? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

37. In order for program administrators and participants to have visibility into their participation with the program, your company will provide data by secure means, in a regular format, on a weekly basis to our data service company. The data should include:

Customer records will contain, among other fields, basic contact & billing information.

Retailer Contract Account records will define what Contract Type is active with the Customer, as well as what was applied to any given invoice. They will include, among other fields, the rate, start date, and expiry date of the contract.

Invoice Records will contain information relating to the billing period, charges billed, kWh billed for, and any additional fees put to the Customer.

Utility Account Records will contain information relating to the Utility Account, including Distribution Company, Account Number, Read Cycle, Service Address, Rate Class, and Meter Number.

Concur? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

