

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: FINANCIAL CONSULTANT FOR THE DISMANTLING ENERGY INEQUITY IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR PROGRAM

OVERALL: ISC is seeking a financial consultant to work with our Dismantling Energy Inequity In Communities of Color program (DEICC), which is comprised of 10 community-based organizations, to provide services including support, guidance, advice and input into strategies for financing their solar community resilience hub in communities of color for a period of approximately 7 months between April - November 2023.

PROPOSAL DUE DATE: 3/31/2023

FUNDING: Up to \$100,000

BACKGROUND

The Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) has more than 30 years of experience working at the intersection of climate and equity, along with a considerable network of partners located throughout the United States and Asia. Our mission is to support communities around the world in addressing environmental, economic, and social challenges to build a better future shaped and shared by all. Our programs focus on building a culture of collaboration, fostering greater equity and inclusion, transitioning to a low-emission economy, and increasing resilience in the face of climate disruption.

ISC recently launched a new program, Dismantling Energy Inequity in Communities of Color (DEICC), that is activating community resilience and dismantling energy insecurity in 10 communities of color across the United States through the development of solar community resilience hubs. Solar community resilience hubs are equitably-designed community centers that enhance community resilience and improve local quality of life by providing social and educational programs. While a resilience hub can take many shapes, most hubs are solar-powered with energy storage through battery backups and have reduced greenhouse gas emissions compared to conventional buildings. The clean energy component ensures that hubs can be used as temporary shelters during climate disasters such as flooding and power outages and can serve as cooling centers in summer and heat shelters in the winter, particularly in communities impacted by energy-inefficient housing. The DEICC program, funded by the Tides Foundation with resources from Wells Fargo, is designed to support 10 people-of-color-led community-based organizations (CBOs) at one of the following phases of solar resilience hub development:

1. Building acquisition (purchase) or retrofit support for the resilience hub
2. Solar and storage feasibility study needs
3. Feasibility study is complete; identify financing options for recommended solar paneling, battery storage and related hub energy needs..

DEICC provides initial funding to 10 partners to develop solar community resilience hubs within their communities at one of the above three phases.

ISC is seeking a financial consultant to work individually with each of the ten community based organizations to provide services including support, guidance, advice and input into strategies for financing their solar community resilience hub for a period of approximately 7 months between April - November 2023.

FINANCIAL CONSULTANT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provide an overview of financing basics and customized training modules within the DEICC “learning cohort” opportunities, either virtually or in-person at cohort convenings.
- Advise each community based organization to ensure its DEICC project maximizes financial funding (i.e. combination of grants and financing, if applicable) depending on the phase of the CBO
- Review a wide range of funding options including, but not limited to: IRA incentives, state/local programs, CDFIs/green bank lending, foundation sources, and novel financing structures
- Identify gaps in structured finance solutions for community resilience hubs
- Recommend structured finance solutions to accelerate community resilience hubs nationwide

FINANCIAL CONSULTANT APPLICATION ELIGIBILITY

- Experience working with people of color led, community-based organizations and with non-profit organizations in securing finance
- Strong communication skills, including presentation and training experience
- Strong understanding of the structured financial products, instruments, and incentives available in the marketplace as well as blended finance approaches that include grant/government sources to fund community-centered renewable energy projects
- Keen understanding of the gaps in financing solutions for disinvested communities, including the challenges they face in accessing financing for renewable energy investments and how to address them
- Experience working with traditional banks and lenders to develop expanded products for disinvested communities
- Knowledge of and relationships with lenders at the local level, such as CDFI or Community Development Credit Unions
- Experience financing clean energy technology and providing clean energy loans; specific experience with building decarbonization is desirable
- Experience tailoring loan products based on community needs

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Interested consultants must provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services listed along with detailed cost information.

Please submit proposals via email to:

Sonia Joshi, Director, US Programs

sjoshi@sustain.org

Subject line: *“RFP – Consultant for developing solar resilience hubs in communities of color”*

Proposals must be submitted no later than 3/31/2023 at 8 PM ET.

The proposal must include the following:

- Cover letter, with detailed name, contact person and contact details (½ page)
- Narrative document outlining the experience, engagement plan with suggested methodology, possible network and product delivery, and/or other technical inputs (maximum 4 pages)
- Description of qualifications in a CV (maximum 2 pages)
- Two references who can speak to consultant’s successful completion of similar work
- Budget information: the consultant should submit a detailed cost proposal including professional fee for the activities defined above in the Responsibilities and Application Eligibility sections.

Questions can be submitted in an email to Sonia Joshi at sjoshi@sustain.org with the subject line: *“Questions – Financial Consultant developing solar resilience hubs in communities of color”*.