Request for Information

Project Name: Buncombe County Solar Installations Phase 3

1. In the RFP, under the section Bid Format, Basic Qualifications, there is a requirement for a NABCEP Certified PV Installer on staff. In this case, does "on-staff" mean on the staff of the prime company submitting the bid?
   If your firm subcontracts with a sub that has a certified installer that is sufficient to meet this requirement. The intent is that the installer be certified regardless of if it is the prime or the sub.
2. Regarding the insurance coverage limits within the RFP, we noticed the coverage limit requirements on the Buncombe County purchasing site are substantially lower than the insurance coverage limits provided in the RFP. Can you confirm the coverage limits provided within the RFP should be followed?
   The County does have minimum standards for projects, but each project is unique in terms of the requirement set forth by our Risk Management Dept. The RFP is the guiding document for this project and the requirements listed in the RFP are the ones required.
3. Are the bidders required to confirm their single and aggregate project bonding capacity provided from their surety company with their proposal submission?
   Providing both the single and aggregated bonding capacity would be the most helpful. Bid bonds should cover the total aggregated amount.
4. What level of structural assessments have been conducted for determining the allowable dead-loading that could be applied to each facility? Please provide letters that state the minimum allowable dead-loading for the rooftops that are proposed for construction.
   The County did contract with a structural engineer to assess these facilities and is waiting on a stamped certification letter. At this time there are no concerns that the facilities won't pass structural certification, but the letters have not been received.
5. For the 60 Court Plaza roof membrane:
   The TPO roof for this building was installed in 2012, is still under warranty and is fully adhered.

   - Does the county have any additional requirements for protecting the roof membrane that fall outside of the roofing manufacturers requirements for solar panel installations? For instance, if the roof manufacturer does not require slip sheets, do you want them anyway?
     No additional requirements beyond maintaining the roof warranty.
6. For the pitched rooftops (Buncombe County Schools), provide the following:
   Roofing information for the County School facilities that is available has been attached to this addendum.

- Regarding rooftop setbacks, perimeter pathways, interior pathways, and smoke ventilation, these buildings are considered to be “Other than Group R-3”. Will the exception to code section 605.11.1.3 “Other than Group R-3” Buildings be allowed by the fire code official for these pitched rooftops? Buncombe county fire code officials have approved the exception in the past and this would help justify larger capacity than what is provided in the helioscope designs.
  Please bid the specified PV System size.
  For informational purposes, Oakley is the only site where the rooftop space limits the PV system size, not the contract demand.

7. For each facility, provide the service voltage on the secondary side of the transformer.
   Bidders will be able to access utility transformer during site visits to confirm the service voltage on the secondary side of the transformer. Voltages are believed to be:

   - **Oakley – 277/480**
   - **Enka – 120/208**
   - **N Buncombe – 120/208**
   - **Emma – 277/480**
   - **60 Court – 277/480**

8. For the Operation and Maintenance contract, what specific scope of work do you require in regards to the operation, remote monitoring, providing service visits as need, annual inspections, the level of testing required, cleaning requirements, and any additional tasks associated with Operation and Maintenance?

9. For each facility, who is the AHJ providing permitting and inspections?
   Buncombe County
10. Will permitting fees be waived?
    Permit fees will not be waived.
11. For each facility, is there a generator connected to the electrical distribution system?
    For all sites with a generator, the PV system must be tied in on the utility side of the generator.
    - **Oakley – No**
    - **Enka – No**
    - **N Buncombe – No**
    - **Emma – No**
    - **60 Court – yes**

12. What is the length of the workmanship warranty?
    Workmanship warranty will be covered in the contract negotiation process, however the County’s preference would be 5 years after project completion.

13. Within the Electrical Service Assessment document, the 2021 Max demand is provided. For each facility, which month does this come from? The AC solar capacity is justified based on the highest peak demand within the past 12 months so is it possible this peak demand number may be over 12 months old, and may require modifying the AC capacity?
    Please bid the specified PV System size. Adjustment can be made wit the selected bidder when projects are submitted for interconnection if necessary and appropriate.

14. Which version of the NEC will be enforced for these projects? The 2023 NEC comes out in January but please identify which NEC version the AHJ will use for enforcement.
    NEC 2020

15. For the mounting systems, is PanelClaw the only approved manufacturer for flat rooftops?
    Panel Claw was used for models and estimates and is the basis of design. IronRidge as an approved alternate.

16. Are there racking manufacturer(s) specified for the pitched rooftop systems?
    IronRidge was used in models and estimates and is the basis of design. Unirac, PLP, and SnapNRack are approved alternates.

17. For Inverters, are SolarEdge inverters the only manufacturer that can be used?
    Yes. There are no approved alternates.

18. Specifications:
    Several questions were submitted regarding specifications. For the sake of consistency and uniformness of bids, please see the attached Solar Specifications document. This document has been used for all other County funded solar projects and should be used again for this bid. However, should any conflict exist between this document and the RFP, the RFP should be considered the guiding document for all projects.

19. Do you require a production meter be installed on the AC output of the inverters? If do, do you have specs for the meter base and socket?
    No, but a SolarEdge commercial cell modem kit is required for each site to provide system monitoring data.

20. With the bidders having the option to select solar panels with different wattages, it's guaranteed that you will be getting bids with different capacities and for that case, you no longer have the ability to compare apples to apples in regards to all bidders submitting a proposal with the same capacity. Is this approach allowed?
    NC General Statue requires that the county go with lowest overall bid and does not provide any flexibility in that area. Bidder must at least meet (or exceed) capacities listed, both the kWdc and kWac specifications.

21. If bidders are allowed to use different wattage solar panels, are the DC capacities listed on the helioscope reports provided with the RFP the minimum allowable DC capacities that can be bid?
    Yes. Bidder must at least meet (or exceed) capacities listed, both the kWdc and kWac specifications.

22. Regarding the point of interconnection, the Electrical Service Assessment document mentions interconnecting at the transformer is possible. Has the available space within the transformer been determined by Duke and can the owner provide pictures of the secondary side of the transformer clearly showing the number of conductors per spade and size of conductors? If this has not been confirmed by Duke, what should the bidders assume regarding interconnecting at the transformer?
    Bidders should assume that tying the PV system in at the utility transformer is possible.

23. For all projects, please state the number of solar panels per series string and the total number of strings connected to each 30kW inverter, and total watts per inverter for the helioscope designs provided so all bidders can provide bids based on the same stringing requirements. For example:
    - 2(30kW) Inverters – 24 modules per string, 3 strings per inverter, total watts per inverter.
      Bidders are encouraged to string the system as they deem most efficient while remaining within the specifications of the module, inverter, and optimizers and while maintaining the specified system output (kWh).