



San Diego Regional Energy Network Cross-Cutting Sector Programs Implementation

Request for Proposals #25-002

San Diego Community Power Responses to Proposer Questions

February 19, 2025

General Questions

1. May proposers include an additional item of letters of support for their bid?

Response: No. Any additional items not included in the RFP Section V.B Content and Format of Proposal will not be considered during the proposal evaluation.

2. Is there an interested bidders list that will be shared? It would be very helpful for nonprofit organizations and other small businesses who are interested in submitting a proposal for a portion or portions of the services scoped.

Response: Community Power does not have an interested bidders list at this time.

3. Is it possible to submit a proposal for discrete tasks or sub-tasks within a specific Program Scope of Work's program implementation services? For example, in Attachment C, would it be possible to submit a proposal to perform work under "Task 5.1: Conduct a regional needs assessment and leverage existing resources/studies to identify job trends, training/educational gaps, and barriers to recruiting and accessing clean energy careers that the program can support" and not the other sub-tasks under "Task 5: Program Implementation"?

Response: Community Power will only accept complete and comprehensive proposals that address all tasks. Proposals for individual sub-tasks will not be accepted.

4. Is there a file size limit?

Response: The maximum allowable file size for uploads in the submission form is 500MB.

Energy Pathways Program Questions

5. *Page 24 - Task 1.1 (How the implementer will leverage existing programs, networks and resources to maximize participant benefits. SDREN and the Implementer will work closely to minimize customer confusion and ensure the program provides complementary services to existing offerings).* If we find through the needs assessment there is a need for new programs, networks or resources, can this funding be used to create these?

Response: The funding for the Energy Pathways Program is intended to be used for approved program activities; it is not intended to be used to create new programs. The needs assessment is intended to identify programmatic gaps in SDREN's service territory that the Energy Pathways Program can address

while meeting its program goals and objectives. Final program activities will be confirmed between SDREN and the Implementer, with approval from SDREN.

6. **Page 25 - Task 3.1 (*Number of college courses completed*). Is this in reference to career technical education (CTE) courses taken at the high school level that will count toward college credit?**

Response: Yes, if a course, such as a CTE program, provides college credit it would count towards this metric. The Implementer and SDREN will work together to confirm the final program metrics.

7. **Page 25 - Task 3.1 (*Number of internships, certifications or apprenticeship opportunities provided*). Can grant funding be used to pay internship wages or stipends? Can grant funding be used to pay for certifications as these are not funded by financial aid?**

Response: The Energy Pathways Program funding can be used for eligible activities that align with program goals and activities as described in the SDREN Business Plan. Eligible activities must be approved by SDREN and may include stipends or selected certifications. External grants and funding such as Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) services are intended to be used to connect program participants with additional available services.

8. **Page 25 - Task 3.1 (*Dollar amount of supplemental funding leveraged*). Does community college tuition covered by financial aid count as leveraged funding?**

Response: Yes, additional funding opportunities that support no-cost participation can be leveraged and tracked.

9. **Page 25 - Task 3.1 (*Transfer defined data to SDREN's customer relationship management (CRM) system on an agreed upon frequency*). Does SDREN utilize Salesforce as a CRM or another system?**

Response: The selection of a CRM system has not been finalized at this time. However, data transfer should comply with industry standards, utilizing protocols such as Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) or flat files to ensure seamless, secure and efficient integration.

10. **Page 27 - Task 5.2 (*Connect students to no-cost, standards-aligned curriculum and career technical education in partnership with local education institutions such as community college districts*). Can grant funding be used to create these programs? I.e. potential costs could include instructor costs, room rentals, textbooks and other course related items not covered by financial aid.**

Response: SDREN program funding can be used for activities outlined in the SDREN Business Plan or for activities otherwise approved by SDREN during implementation and may include instructor costs, room rentals, textbooks and other course related items. Implementers are expected to leverage existing, non-ratepayer-funded programs wherever possible to avoid duplicating existing regional efforts. If a gap is identified during the needs assessment, SDREN and the Implementer can work to address it through eligible activities.

11. **Page 27 - Task 5.2 (*Identify and coordinate wraparound services that address barriers to program completion including access to technology, materials and supplies as well as resume and interview***

preparation). Can grant funding be used to support any of these wraparound services if they are not readily available from local community-based organizations (CBOs)? For instance, San Diego Workforce Partnership (SDWP) would require a person to enroll in workforce innovation and opportunity act (WIOA) services to access WIOA funding, which would not be consistent with the outcomes and objectives of the SDREN programming. Additionally, could grant funding be used to support the purchase of refurbished laptops or digital literacy courses from local CBOs? Can grant funds be used to pay the salary of case managers to assist in providing, tracking and reporting the wraparound services? Can you provide a list of allowable expenditure for grant funds on wraparound services?

Response: SDREN programs are ratepayer funded and may be used for activities and expenses that justifiably advance the goals of the Energy Pathways Program, and the broader energy efficiency Workforce Education & Training (WE&T) sector. Dual enrollment in programs or funding that is not-ratepayer funded, such as federal grants, can be used to provide supplemental services such as wraparound services. Anticipated labor expenses should be included in the bidder's proposal in Attachment D (Budget Template).

12. Besides the quantitative data delivered on program execution, are there any qualitative milestones that demonstrate program success factors (i.e. program public relations and recognition)?

Response: SDREN intends to work with the Implementer to define program milestones and program success factors. The Implementer will be required to collect any additional metrics as specified by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). Additionally, Task 4.3 of the Scope of Work specifies that Implementers will "coordinate with marketing and communications staff to produce at least three case studies demonstrating program success. The case studies are intended for public distribution and will highlight program successes, challenges and best practices."

13. What existing relationships with local educational institutions, employers, trade groups and community organizations exist and can be leveraged to facilitate outreach and enhance the program launch?

Response: The Implementer is expected to develop and lead a program outreach strategy to include activities such as establishing relationships with partners to ensure successful program launch and implementation.

14. If the program needs to be adjusted based on initial feedback, what is the process for making those changes? Also, who at SDREN will review and approve?

Response: SDREN staff will review and approve changes as necessary and determine if program adjustments will require a corresponding regulatory/compliance action. As stated in the SDREN Business Plan, the SDREN Oversight and Administration team is responsible for enacting program changes during the portfolio cycle.

15. Does SDREN currently have training or material resources that could be utilized by the Implementer to help communicate and launch the program?

Response: While marketing and communications staff will support SDREN-wide program marketing, Implementers are expected to have the expertise to develop and propose effective program launch strategies.

16. What specific support mechanisms are in place for reaching and engaging students from disadvantaged communities to ensure delivery that specifically incorporates California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and SDREN environmental and social justice (ESJ) policies?

Response: Proposers can review the CPUC's [ESJ Action Plan](#) and the Energy Pathways Program [Implementation Plan](#). Table 1 of the Implementation Plan outlines the alignment between the program's objectives, SDREN's core values and the CPUC's ESJAP goals. Implementers are expected to have, or partner with organizations that have, the necessary skills and experience to effectively reach and engage the Energy Pathways Program's target audience, as described in the Implementation Plan.

17. Is there a pre-existing list of careers and jobs in the clean energy industry that can serve as a roadmap for curriculum development, or is the Implementer to develop and approve the list? Is the expectation for "training" to deliver content and resources in a combination of both in-person and online methods?

Response: Implementers can consult existing clean energy career lists, such as the Interstate Renewable Energy Council's (IREC) [clean energy career maps](#). Careers and job placements included in program services should clearly help achieve the WE&T Program vision, set forth by the California Long Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan (CLTEESP), which is to provide the human capital necessary to achieve California's economic energy efficiency and demand-side management potential. The delivery of training is expected to be proposed by the Implementer based on their experience and expertise.

18. What systems (i.e. CRM, CX) exist that can either be utilized or are required to be used for reporting in program implementation?

Response: Implementers are expected to have the necessary systems in place to execute the tasks outlined in Task 3 of the Scope of Work (Program Data and Reporting).

Workforce Training and Capacity Building Program Questions

19. What barriers to participation have you identified in previous initiatives, particularly for disadvantaged communities, and how can we best address them?

Response: Please refer to Table 2 in the Workforce Training and Capacity Building Program [Implementation Plan](#) for examples of market barriers and corresponding intervention strategies. Additional analysis on market barriers can be found in the [SDREN Business Plan](#). SDREN expects the Implementer to have expertise in best practices for effectively engaging program target audiences.

20. Are there existing partnerships with community organizations, public higher education and career technical institutions, training providers or employers that we should be aware of and potentially

engage with? Additionally, which key stakeholders are essential for successful program design and delivery, and do you have specific organizations in mind?

Response: The Implementer is expected to develop and lead a program outreach strategy to include activities such as establishing relationships with partners to ensure successful program launch and implementation.

21. What specific data, reporting frequency and regulatory and compliance constraints are expected of the Implementer, and will SDREN provide any support training or resources?

Response: SDREN will provide a template for the Implementer to provide program data for regulatory and compliance filings. The Implementer is expected to support SDREN with monthly, quarterly and annual compliance filings to the CPUC via the California Energy Data and Reporting System (“CEDARS”).

22. Are there budget directives or guidelines, including expectations for leveraging external partnerships and funding to enhance the programs' reach and effectiveness?

Response: Implementers may include subcontractors as part of the proposal team to enhance the program's reach and effectiveness and should include them in the Budget Template (Attachment D). Additionally, leveraging external funding sources and forming mutually beneficial partnerships is considered a best practice and is expected to be integrated into the program design and strategies.

23. What is the anticipated timeline for launching the program, and are there any key milestones pre-established for the implementation phase?

Response: The anticipated timeline for launching the Workforce Training and Capacity Building Program is Q4 2025. SDREN expects Implementers to propose key milestones for the implementation phase.

24. Will SDREN's communications team be engaged in the coordination of marketing and outreach efforts?

Response: Community Power has dedicated internal marketing and communications staff and consultant support responsible for developing and maintaining online program content, other digital media promotions and general marketing and outreach efforts at the program portfolio level. These staff will look to the Implementer as subject matter experts to provide content and input to develop strategies, campaigns and materials while adhering to agreed upon branding and style guidelines.

The Implementer will lead development of the program's outreach strategy to deliver services to the program's target audience based on the criteria identified in the SDREN Business Plan and program Implementation Plan, or as mutually determined.

25. Are there specific regulatory or compliance requirements we should be aware of in relation to training and job placement services?

Response: The Implementer's services shall be subject to and performed in accordance with all applicable local, state and federal laws, rules and regulations.

26. Will legal resources be available for contract negotiations or other legal documentation related to the program?

Response: No. Any costs for program implementation, including legal costs for negotiating and preparing contracts with subcontractors, should be included in the Proposed Budget and Narrative section with associated attachments.

27. *Page 29 #3 (Provide wraparound services and create opportunities for program graduates to seamlessly transition into employment with local employers).* What wraparound services are allowed to be funded by the grant? Can participants be provided with stipends while completing the trainings?

Response: SDREN programs are ratepayer funded and may be used for activities and expenses that justifiably advance the goals of the program, and the broader energy efficiency Workforce Education & Training (WE&T) sector. Eligible activities must be approved by SDREN and may include stipends and selected wraparound services. However, the Implementer is expected to identify external sources of non-ratepayer funding, such as grants, that can provide program participants with wraparound services.

Energy Pathways Program and Workforce Training and Capacity Building Program Questions

28. *Pages 25 & 31 - Task 3.1.* Does SDREN have annual or total participation goals for the Energy Pathways and Workforce Training and Capacity Building programs?

Response: SDREN developed preliminary estimates of total participants reached (a total of 17,500 for the Energy Pathways Program and 2,200 for the Workforce Training and Capacity Building Program) and will collaborate with the Implementer to refine estimates based on the Implementer's assumptions and subject matter expertise.

29. Can these funds be used to pay for internship wages and/or stipends for participants under the Energy Pathways and Workforce Training and Capacity Building programs?

Response: SDREN programs are ratepayer funded and may be used for activities and expenses that justifiably advance the goals of the program, and the broader energy efficiency Workforce Education & Training (WE&T) sector. Eligible activities must be approved by SDREN and may include stipends.

30. Can these funds be used to pay for training costs/tuition under the Energy Pathways and Workforce Training and Capacity Building programs?

Response: SDREN programs are ratepayer funded and may be used for activities and expenses that justifiably advance the goals of the program, and the broader energy efficiency Workforce Education & Training (WE&T) sector. Eligible activities must be approved by SDREN and may include training costs.