



**Call for Expressions of Interest – Solar Contractor Services
Municipality of Colchester *Solar Colchester* Program**

August 2020

1. Introduction

The Municipality of Colchester is seeking “Expressions of Interest” from qualified, experienced solar contractors for the installation of municipally financed solar photovoltaic systems on private property, as part of the Solar Colchester program.

The purpose of this document is to:

- i. identify skilled solar contractors in the Province who are interested and qualified to install Solar Colchester projects;
- ii. provide information to contractors about Solar Colchester; and
- iii. provide guidance on content of submission.

The Municipality’s Solar Colchester program team will review the Expressions of Interest, and sufficiently qualified and experienced solar contractor/installer teams will be added to the Municipality’s list of preferred contractors. Only solar PV systems installed by a contractor on the approved list will be eligible for financing through Solar Colchester. Contractors that are not selected for participation in Solar Colchester at this time will have the occasion to resubmit an Expression of Interest in the future.

Solar Colchester aims to support local contractors and installers and help to build the solar industry in Colchester. Local contractors and contractors new to the solar industry are encouraged to apply.

2. Project Background

Solar Colchester is a municipal Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program that allows homeowners in Colchester, as well as certain non-profit institutions, to install solar photovoltaic (PV) systems on their properties with financing assistance from the Municipality. Solar Colchester was launched in April 2019, and to date has installed 18 systems across the Municipality of Colchester. In the pilot year of the program, all Solar Colchester installations were completed by a single contractor – the program is now being opened to other qualified contractors and installers in Nova Scotia.

Currently, Solar Colchester has an annual budget of \$300,000 and can finance up to \$20,000 for each project, allowing the Municipality to fund at least 15 projects per year. The Municipality is in the process of applying for additional funding to increase program capacity. The program is compatible with Efficiency

Nova Scotia's *SolarHomes* program, which offers a \$0.60/Watt rebate to homeowners, making solar PV systems more affordable and allowing homeowners to leverage Municipal financing.

Solar Colchester is marketed to homeowners as a program that makes it more affordable to invest in renewable energy and to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. The program also helps homeowners to know where to start to get solar installed; many homeowners do not know how to select a solar contractor. The Municipality is going to develop a list of qualified and reputable contractors to make that process less daunting. Solar Colchester offers numerous benefits to homeowners:

- Install solar panels at a low upfront cost
- Get connected with qualified and reputable solar installers
- Generate their own electricity and reduce their carbon footprint
- Be independent of volatile energy prices
- Invest in renewable energy

Solar Colchester finances both rooftop and ground mount solar installations. Although not a requirement, all participants to date have entered into net-metering agreements with Nova Scotia Power. Participants are permitted to install systems that incorporate battery storage; however, the current cost of battery storage and the financing limits make this option inaccessible for many homeowners.

3. Services Required

Contractors installing Solar Colchester projects are expected to provide the following services:

- Provide free site evaluations and quotes to property owners, including an equipment and materials list, information sheets on modules and inverters to be used, warranty information, payback calculation, and other standard inclusions.
- Evaluate roof conditions and determine if the homeowner requires an engineering certificate.
- Design an appropriately sized solar array and a single line drawing of the system.
- Submit documentation to the Solar Colchester program administrator as required.
- Apply for the SolarHomes rebate on behalf of property owners.
- Apply for Enhanced Net-metering on behalf of property owners.
- Install solar PV systems (both rooftop and ground mount).
- Arrange for rough-in and final inspections from Nova Scotia Power.
- Participate in Solar Colchester marketing or information sessions from time to time.

Contractors will be paid directly by the Municipality, except in cases where the cost of the installation exceeds the financing limit. In these cases, the property owner will pay the difference directly to the contractor. All Solar Colchester contractors must be *SolarHomes approved contractors*.

4. Timeline

Call for Expressions of Interest Issued	August 17, 2020
Call for Expressions of Interest Closed	September 8, 2020
List of Approved Contractors Announced	September 15, 2020

5. Review & Evaluation

The Solar Colchester program team intends to compile, review, and evaluate all qualifying respondents to this call for Expressions of Interest with a view to selecting contractor/installer teams who will be added to the “Solar Colchester Approved Contractor List”. Submissions will be evaluated based on certifications, experience, references, and quality of quote and site evaluation package. There is no maximum number of contractors that will be accepted. The list of approved contractors will be provided to prospective Solar Colchester participants.

6. Submission Content and Deadline

Respondents to this call for Expressions of Interest should include a summary of the following information to illustrate the solar contractor’s capabilities:

- Company name, location, and contact information
- Relevant training and certification
- Experience (years of experience, specific project examples)
- References (minimum of 3)
- List of sub-contractors and years of experience for each
- Training required by sub-contracted or in-house installers
- Sample quote and site evaluation package
- Photos of previous PV installations
- Preferred solar equipment and warranties offered
- Proof of Workers Compensation and Liability Insurance
- Is your company an Efficiency NS *SolarHomes approved installer*?

Submissions must be received by 4:30PM on September 8, 2020 to be considered. Submissions can be submitted by email to jburris@colchester.ca or by mail or in person to the address below.

Municipality of Colchester
c/o Joanna Burris
1 Church Street, Truro NS, B2N 3Z5

7. Contact Information

For more information, please contact Joanna Burris, Sustainability Planner/Solar Colchester Program Administrator, at 1-902-897-3168 or jburris@colchester.ca.

8. Reference Documents

Solar Colchester PACE By-law

<https://www.colchester.ca/bylaws-1/2563-solar-colchester-pace-by-law-chapter-24-january-2020>

Solar Colchester PACE Policy

<https://www.colchester.ca/bylaws-and-policies/2278-solar-colchester-pace-policy-february-2019>

About SolarHomes

<https://www.energycyns.ca/residential/services-rebates/solarhomes/>