

Questions For Tribes to Ask Community Solar Companies

Many Tribes and Pueblos are continuing to navigate the influx of solar developers proposing partnerships and projects with Tribes. This resource provides Tribal leaders and staff with important questions they can ask a solar company to determine if that business is the right fit for the Tribe.

Sovereign Energy is available to offer further assistance to Tribes in navigating these discussions or assessing project proposals. As a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting Tribal Nations at no cost, our commitment is to our Tribes in prioritizing the preservation of Tribal sovereignty over corporate interests. We are available at your request.

Company History

- What types of energy development does your company support?
- How long has your company been in business?
- How long has your company been focusing on community solar projects?
- What is your typical role in the community solar project development process?
- Do you have any existing, current, or future projects located in New Mexico? If so, which electric utilities are you working with?
- Do you have experience partnering with Tribal Nations? If possible, could you please name which Tribes?
- Do you have any existing, current, or future community solar projects located on Tribal land?

Tribal Sovereignty

- How do you further Tribal energy sovereignty?
- How do you protect Tribal data sovereignty and confidentiality?
- What is your company's view or support of environmental justice issues?
- How do you conduct community outreach and engagement as a company and on specific projects?
- How will you involve our Tribal community in the decision-making process for this project?

Operations

- Do you offer workforce development or apprenticeship programs? If so, do you have any programs to directly support Native workers?
- How do you determine which materials and equipment to use? What types of warranties do you offer?
- How do you vet third-party partners?
- Please list any third-party entities that you work with, including established subcontractors.
- Shall we decide to proceed, what type of support, communication, and other resources are you seeking from the Tribe?
- How do you plan on supporting Tribal project timelines?

Financial Specs

- Do you have a set process for determining land lease amounts?
- How do you adapt land lease pricing on Tribal lands?
- How do you offer transparency in project financing structures?
- How will you ensure transparency and accountability throughout the duration of the project?
- Do you intend to own this project? If so, what type of PPA structure do you plan to utilize for this project? Is this negotiable?
- Do you allow for/support Tribal ownership/operation of projects?
- If you intend to own the project, how do you plan to finance the project? Will project financing be resourced in-house or outsourced to external partners?
- How do you define an equitable partnership?
- Are you familiar with grant-funded projects? Do you assist with grant applications?
- What federal, state, and private funding sources have you worked with?



If your Tribe has any questions about choosing a community solar company, please contact us.

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