The Electric Vehicle and Photovoltaic Power Purchase Handbook:
A toolkit for developing electric vehicle and rooftop solar group purchase programs
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Executive summary

Recently, a number of communities have piloted a new idea: electric vehicle (EV) group purchase programs that provide a limited-time opportunity for residents to get discounts on purchasing an electric vehicle. These programs are modeled after successful solar power group purchase programs, which dozens of communities have adopted since the first program was pioneered in Portland, Oregon, in 2010. In 2015, three EV group purchase programs piloted in Colorado and Utah: one in the Fort Collins/Loveland area, led by Drive Electric Northern Colorado; one in the Salt Lake City area, led by the University of Utah in partnership with Utah Clean Energy; and a joint solar and EV program in the Boulder/Denver area, led by Boulder County.

These programs have been remarkably successful. In each case, the programs have led to dramatic increases in EV sales—up to 300 percent community wide. In addition, the Boulder program led to more than 140 people installing nearly 750 kilowatts (kW) of solar power on their homes. These programs are advantageous because the private sector provides the financial incentives, so the cost to local governments or agencies that administer the programs is very low.

To illustrate just how much impact these programs can have, one participating dealer in Boulder County sold 5 percent of all Nissan LEAFs purchased in the United States during the period of September–December 2015. The following chart compares sales in the same months of 2014 and 2015 in the two areas of Colorado where these programs piloted in 2015.

![Graph comparing 2014 and 2015 sales in Colorado](image)

While EVs and rooftop solar systems offer many benefits to both the community and individual buyers, they are still an unfamiliar technology to many people. A group purchase program can serve as a very effective tool: 1) to help your constituents understand that EVs available today are affordable, comfortable, and able to meet consumers’ needs for many types of trips; and 2) to inform them that home solar systems can reduce emissions and
save consumers money. Thus, starting a group purchase program may be one of the most effective methods for spurring your local EV and solar markets.

This tool kit is designed to lead you through the basic steps necessary to create a successful group purchase program in your community. Because solar group purchase programs have been around much longer, there are more resources available, so this tool kit primarily will focus on EV group purchase programs, while providing some information on joint solar and EV programs. An additional resource for solar programs is *The Solarize Guidebook: A community guide to collective purchasing of residential PV systems*, published by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

**What is an EV group purchase program?**

The basic idea behind an EV group purchase program is that a local agency negotiates a discounted price from one or more EV dealers or car companies. This deal is then available for a limited time to members of a group, whether they are employees of a company or residents of a community. The agency then agrees to take the lead in outreach and marketing for this deal. The key elements of an EV group purchase program include the following:

*Discounted prices on EVs, possibly in combination with charging infrastructure and solar panels*  
The lead agency conducts a competitive bid process to get the best possible prices on buying or leasing selected models of EVs. The selected car dealers and manufacturers then provide discounts or rebates for program participants.

*Limited-time offer*  
Having a discrete time limit motivates customers to act now while the deal is still in place. This is particularly important in the EV marketplace, where some potential buyers have a tendency to wait for newer technology to come out. The limited-time offer helps spur them to act now, helping achieve market transformation.

*Community-based outreach and marketing*  
One of the biggest barriers to EV adoption is simply the lack of awareness that EVs are available and affordable. Trusted voices in the community (e.g., local governments, air quality agencies, neighborhood groups, or trusted nonprofit organizations) can communicate the value of EVs. Broadcasting an affordable deal from a group purchase program can move many people to action.
Happy new Nissan LEAF owner Michelle Krezek points to her new EV, purchased through the Boulder County group purchase program.

Do these programs actually spur sales of more EVs?

Yes. Most of the early pilots have had significant success in increasing EV sales. In Boulder County, sales of Nissan LEAFs went up by 230 percent from 52 LEAFs in the county in the last four months of 2014, to 173 in the last four months of 2015.

In Northern Colorado, the program saw a nearly 300 percent increase in the sales of LEAFs from 15 in the last two months of 2014 to 59 in the last two months of 2015.

One concern might be that these programs simply draw customers who would have purchased another EV whether or not the program existed. Group purchase programs, however, influence people who were not planning to purchase an EV to reconsider. In fact, results from a survey of participants in the largest EV program revealed that 72 percent of the respondents had not originally been planning on buying an EV, as the chart below shows. The survey also showed that more than 90 percent of people who entered the process and did not actually buy a vehicle are now interested in buying an EV in the future.
Why should my community support EVs?

EVs can bring many benefits to your community. Because EVs have no tailpipe emissions, they can greatly improve air quality and public health. As Colorado shifts toward more renewable energy in its electricity generation, these air quality benefits will grow over time.

For example, in the Denver metropolitan and North Front Range areas, where our state is struggling to meet federal ozone standards, the emissions of ozone precursors from EVs are much lower than those from gasoline vehicles. The chart below shows the percentage reduction in the two major ozone precursors, volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NOx), and for carbon monoxide (CO) and greenhouse gases (GHGs) for an EV in this part of Colorado compared to a gasoline vehicle based on both the 2013 and 2020 electricity mixes¹.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VOCs</td>
<td>99.1%</td>
<td>99.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOx</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>70.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>99.4%</td>
<td>99.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHGs</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And, of course, for customers who power their cars through solar electricity, the vehicles are closer to zero emissions.

¹ Southwest Energy Efficiency Project, 2013, Air Quality Benefits of Electric Vehicles in the Denver Metro and North Front Range Area:
http://www.swenergy.org/publications/transportation
If your community has climate goals or a climate action plan, EV adoption is important in reducing GHG emissions from transportation.

In addition, EVs bring some real economic advantages to our communities. Even with gas costing only $2 per gallon, EVs are cheaper to operate, with $500 or more in annual fuel savings—money that consumers will likely recycle into purchases in your community. In addition, there are state and federal tax credits for EVs, which together can add up to $13,500. Increased EV sales mean that more of these tax credits will come to your residents—once again, dollars that consumers are likely to spend in your local economy. Furthermore, much of the money spent on gasoline in Colorado goes to out-of-state petroleum producers while most of the dollars spent on electricity stays in the Colorado economy.

Finally, because a group purchase program is completely voluntary and is a very inexpensive program for the public sector to operate since the discounts come from private sector partners, these good programs build goodwill in the community.

**How expensive is it to run a group purchase program?**

One of the great advantages of a group purchase program is that it very inexpensive for a local agency to run, but it still has a large impact. Your role is harnessing the collective buying power of your constituents to negotiate a discount from private sector providers (car dealers, auto companies, and solar installers), and then using your access to the community to get the word out. Existing state and federal tax credits improve the deals. For a very small outlay of staff time and money, you can create a big impact in the community. For example, the chart below shows how Boulder County invested only $7,000 in staff time and advertising costs and leveraged its dollars by a factor of 750. The specific ownership tax alone on vehicle sales is nearly 35 times greater than the county’s initial investment. Boulder County reported a total of only 165 hours of staff time used for this effort.
Drive Electric Northern Colorado spent approximately 40 hours of staff time, primarily on outreach and Web portal setup, and it reported spending about five minutes each workday sharing information with the participating dealers. They had no out-of-pocket expenses.

**Who can offer a group purchase program? Does it have to be a local government?**

There are many different organizations or agencies that can offer the program, depending on what is the best fit for your community. After all, among the programs to date, one was sponsored by local government, one by a university, and one by a nonprofit. Other possibilities could include utilities, local economic development organizations, and air quality agencies. The key is to choose an organization that has credibility within the community and the capacity to successfully manage the program.

**Why would a dealer or automobile manufacturer participate in the program?**

Selling EVs can be challenging for automobile dealerships. In many cases, salespeople are unfamiliar with EVs, and there is a substantial learning curve in becoming familiar enough with the vehicle to be an effective salesperson. If sales volumes are low, there is little incentive to put in the necessary time and training. However, if dealerships can sell hundreds of vehicles, salespeople will have a huge incentive to learn about EVs, and dealerships will find it a better investment to train them. Added to this, state and federal tax credits are important to customers, but they are complex and salespeople view them as another level of information that they must communicate to customers. Group purchase programs package the tax credits, dealership, and manufacturer rebates together to show just how affordable EVs can be, making it easier for the salespeople and dealerships.

The group purchase programs also offer effective marketing and outreach from community organizations and outside sources that prepare customers to come to a dealership with more information. Potentially, the more informed customers are upon arrival, the less time it will take for dealerships to complete a sale. In addition, program participation will drive customers to the dealer and generate word of mouth, which may contribute to increased sales beyond the end of the discount program.

**How large are the discounts?**

The discounts that the programs offer are based on a competitive procurement process and negotiations with the chosen auto dealers, manufacturers, and solar installers.

For example, in the Boulder County program, manufacturer and dealer discounts were approximately $8,500 on the 2015 Nissan LEAF.
In the Utah program, the discounts were approximately $7,400 on 2015 Nissan LEAFs, $6,000 on 2016 LEAFs, $5,200 on 2015 BMW i3s, $2,900 on 2016 Ford Focus electrics, $2,000 on 2016 Ford C-MAX Energis, and $3,500 on 2016 Ford Fusion Energis.

On the solar side, the Boulder program included $750 rebates on the cost of a home solar program. Boulder is now negotiating on a second solar program that will offer graduated discounts based on the size of the system. Currently, a typical market price for a home solar system is approximately $3,500 per kW of capacity. Under the graduated pricing, larger systems will cost only $2,730 per kW.

The financial case:

In communication to the public about a group purchase program, a core message is how the combination of the group discounts with state and federal tax credits make a new EV very affordable. For example, in the Boulder County program, the breakdown for Nissan LEAFs purchased through the program was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>S Model</th>
<th>SV Model</th>
<th>SL Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturer’s Suggested Retail Price</td>
<td>$31,810</td>
<td>$34,460</td>
<td>$36,365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Discount</td>
<td>$8,349</td>
<td>$8,349</td>
<td>$8,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Tax Credit</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Tax Credit</td>
<td>$3,831</td>
<td>$3,831</td>
<td>$3,831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Price</strong></td>
<td><strong>$12,130</strong></td>
<td><strong>$14,780</strong></td>
<td><strong>$16,685</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compared with an average cost of over $33,000\(^2\) for a new light-duty vehicle in 2015, the deal offered for the LEAF was a significant savings for consumers. Even with gas prices below $2 per gallon, EVs still provide their owners with hundreds of dollars in fuel savings each year in addition to reduced maintenance costs.

However, there are complications to communicating with customers about these tax credits. The federal tax credit is nonrefundable, so a customer will only receive the full amount if he or she has a tax liability greater than $7,500. The state tax credit is refundable, so customers receive it regardless of their tax liability, but the precise amount may vary between taxpayers.

In addition, there are substantial annual fuel cost savings. Even with gas costing an average of only $2 per gallon, a Nissan LEAF customer who drives 12,000 miles per year and pays $0.12 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for electricity will save $550 a year compared to paying for gas for a 25 miles-per-gallon car.

One feature that the Utah program included was a [savings calculator](http://mediaroom.kbb.com/new-car-transaction-prices-jump-august-2015) linked to the program website, allowing customers to see what their likely annual fuel cost savings would be compared to their existing vehicle.

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There also can be a compelling case for home solar systems. The details will be variable, however, depending on the utility that serves your area because different utilities have unique incentives for solar systems. In addition, the actual production of a solar system will depend on structure-specific details, including building orientation, roof angle, and shading. However, as an example, the second round of the Boulder County program offered solar systems at $2,730 per kW of panels installed. For an ideally located and tilted roof, this equals about $0.061 per kWh, compared to a retail price of over $0.10 per kWh when buying power from the utility.

**What customers are eligible to participate?**

It is up to you to decide who is eligible to participate in the program. In some cases, employers offer group purchase programs, and so they are only open to employees of those companies; in others, programs are open to everybody who lives in the community. It is also possible to have a hybrid program, where anyone in a community is eligible, but participating public agencies and large employers make special efforts to reach out to their employees and inform them of the opportunity.

**Should we include solar?**

One initial question is whether to create a joint solar photovoltaic (PV) and electric vehicle (EV) program or an EV-only program. Of the three pilot programs, two were EV-only and one combined EV and PV. The advantage of a combined program is that it can contribute both to getting more electric cars on the road and to making the electricity mix cleaner. It also is reasonable to assume that there is a significant overlap between people who are interested in acquiring PV and EV. In the Boulder program, which did combine both, approximately 15 percent of EV customers also purchased a solar system; of those, about two-thirds sized their solar systems to cover both the electric load for powering their house and for charging their car. Having both the solar and auto industry communicating to their customers about the programs provides opportunities for co-marketing, potentially expanding the customer base for both.

Surveys from the two Colorado programs have shown that environmental concerns are strong motivators for customers participating in EV group purchase programs. Because the combination of a solar power system and an EV means essentially emissions-free transportation, there is a very powerful marketing opportunity inherent with a joint solar and EV program.

In the Boulder program, approximately 140 customers installed 830 kW of solar panels, with an average of about 5.5 kWh per installation. About 25 percent of those customers who purchased solar panels also acquired an EV.

One way of looking at these numbers is to compare the expected annual electricity use from the LEAFs sold in the program to the expected solar generation. Each LEAF, on average, is expected to use about 3,400 kWh/year, for a total of 850,000 kWh/year. The expected solar generation is 1.13 million kWh—exceeding the total energy consumption of the vehicles.
Colorado law does require that investor-owned utilities include EV charging in their net metering programs so that customers have the option to account for their new EV when installing solar panels.

Including solar systems does increase the complexity of the program. It requires a separate request for proposal (RFP) and review process to choose the solar contractor, ongoing interactions with the solar contractor, and a slightly more complicated customer-tracking system. Depending on your local utility, you may or may not be located in an area with strong incentives for solar.

**Does the program need an outside administrator?**

Some group purchase programs have used outside administrators while others have used in-house administrators. An outside administrator is advantageous because it may lessen the load on agency staff since the outside administrator would be primarily responsible for issuing the RFP, reviewing RFP responses, setting up the program website, and maintaining the database of program participants. The local agencies still will need to play a strong role in outreach, since a core component of the program is community-based marketing. An outside administrator either will require funding from the agency or will need to add a fee to the solar and EV programs to cover their administrative costs. One important issue to address with an outside administrator is access to data—it is important to establish up front how much data the agency will need about customers and ensure that it will have access to this data. For local governments or other public institutions, another advantage of an outside administrator may be an ability to move much more quickly on certain areas, such as review and evaluation of RFPs, which can be more time consuming under public sector procurement policies.

**What is the RFP process for EV providers?**

Typically, a program administrator will use a competitive bid process to select the companies that will participate. The idea is to find the companies that will offer the best combination of discounted pricing, good financing options, superior customer service, and largest availability of inventory. For any individual program, you will need to decide which aspects are most important when choosing the contractors.

You should send RFPs to both auto dealers and to the Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs), the technical term for automobile manufacturers. You will then want to create a committee to review the responses and decide which providers to select.

Note that this will likely be a non-exclusive selection; that is, you may choose multiple OEM/dealer combinations. For example, the Salt Lake City area program had participation from BMW, Ford, and Nissan, while Northern Colorado had both BMW and Nissan participate. This is in contrast to solar group purchase programs, which have typically selected one provider because the products are more similar. When it comes to EVs,
consumers may be looking for very different types of vehicles, so there is real value to offering a diverse range of vehicles in the program.

In terms of discounted pricing, the RFP should ask what models will be included and what the manufacturer’s suggested retail price (MSRP) is for each of these models. It should then ask what the discount below MSRP will be for direct purchase and what package will be offered for a two- or three-year lease.

One important point here is to understand how state and federal tax credits play into the lease process. For federal tax credits, the tax credits typically go to the lessor, not the lessee; that is, the tax credits will go to the car company and should be reflected in lower lease payments by the individual or business leasing the vehicle. Colorado tax credits, by contrast, go to the lessee, so they should not be factored into the lease rate offered by the company. Note that you could request either a fixed price or prices that go down as the number of sales go up. To date, all of the EV pilots have had fixed prices, but some solar programs have tied the price to the volume of participants.

The RFP should also ask what financing deals the dealerships will offer. For example, will they commit to 72 months of 0 percent financing for participants with adequate credit scores?

Customer service is hard to rank and evaluate, but it is critical. In the limited number of programs offered to date, the ones that have been most successful have featured dealerships where there is a salesperson who is an “EV evangelist” who focuses on making the program work for EV customers. The least successful program was one where customers would read about the program, sign up online, and then go to the dealer only to find salespeople who did not even know there was an EV group purchase program in the first place. This kind of dealer experience can make or break the program. This leads to an important question about what plans the dealership has for staff training to ensure that there are enough salespeople with knowledge about EVs to respond to customer demand.

Availability of inventory is also very important. If the program is successful, the participating dealers may sell a lot more EVs than they are used to. For example, in the Boulder area program, Boulder Nissan sold 248 Nissan LEAFs in four months, compared to 55 in the same four months the year before. Tynan’s Nissan in Fort Collins sold more than 50 LEAFs than normal during the two-month program in Northern Colorado, compared to 15 in the same two months of 2014. It is important that the dealership is prepared and has a plan in place if it should run out of inventory. You can require such a plan in your RFP.

The RFP can also ask about other benefits that the respondents may offer to participants, such as discounted prices for home chargers, free access to a company-owned charging network, or other perks.

Another potential area for program expansion is to include electric assist bicycles, or e-bikes. The inclusion of e-bikes would give consumers a direct link to the programs many local governments administer to encourage bicycling and reduce traffic. This would require another procurement process with bicycle shops or e-bike suppliers, but it could open up the program to more participants.
Appendix 1 contains sample language on the scope of work and requirements for an EV RFP.

**What is the RFP process for solar installers?**

If you choose to include solar power systems in the group purchase program, you will also need to have a competitive procurement process for the solar installer.

First you must ask what discounted price the solar installer will offer. A key component of evaluating installers is to find out to what extent they offer competitively discounted pricing with volume rebates for purchasing and financing systems. The RFP should ask for the price per watt for a direct purchase by a residential customer and inquire what the terms would be for a solar lease or a power purchase agreement. The RFP also can request greater discounts based on the volume of sales; that is, if the total number of watts installed through the program exceeds certain thresholds, there will be a further reduction in the price per watt. This can be offered as a rebate to the earlier customers who paid the initial pricing. Some other important things to include in the RFP is requiring the installer to provide a competitive dollar per watt ($/watt) purchase price for solar PV systems as well as financing options such as a lease, power purchase agreement, or loans.

You also can decide to include commercial buildings for solar installation. Because there is so much variance among commercial buildings, it is probably not possible to get the same type of firm pricing as with residential properties. The RFP can, however, request a competitive, generic maximum dollar per watt ($/watt) estimate up front before the program even identifies specific customers.

The RFP also could ask for solutions and pricing for battery storage to be coupled with residential or commercial solar installations in addition to pricing for EV charging.

Appendix 2 contains a sample solar RFP.

**How long should we offer the program?**

There are several reasons to offer a time-limited program. A time limit creates a sense of urgency—motivating customers to participate now rather than later. In addition, dealers or installers who are not chosen through the RFP process are less likely to be upset with the program if the time line is relatively short.

The EV group purchase programs that have been implemented to date have had time lines ranging from six weeks to four months. In the existing programs, the initial plan was to offer a shorter program, typically one month, but the programs were all extended due to customer demand.
Does it matter what time of year we run the program?

The pilot programs that have been implemented all ran relatively late in the year. Boulder County’s program started at the end of August and ran through the end of December. The Northern Colorado program launched on Black Friday and also ran through the end of December. The Utah program ran in December but extended into January.

Typically, car sales are lower in the first few months of the year, then pick up to a fairly steady rate, and peak late in the year. For EVs, tax credits play a large role in determining when car sales peak since customers can’t claim tax credits for purchases in a given year until the following year. So, if a customer buys an EV in January, he or she will have to wait more than a year, until he or she files taxes for the previous year, to claim the tax credit. On the other hand, if a customer purchases an EV in December, he or she will be able to claim his or her tax credits in just a few months. Thus, customers may be more motivated to participate later in the year. However, to date, there is not enough experience with EV group purchase programs to make any definitive statements.

What are the likely demographics of program participants?

In the Boulder program, most participants (95 percent) were two-car households. This makes sense given some of the challenges associated with EVs. Since most pure EVs have ranges of only about 100 miles and there is still limited availability of fast-charging infrastructure, customers are less likely to choose EVs as their only vehicle if their households occasionally make longer trips. This may not apply in a program that is also offering plug-in hybrid vehicles such as the Chevrolet Volt, however, since those vehicles have the ability to travel for hundreds of miles.

Boulder County also found that most participants (94 percent) lived in single-family homes. This finding also makes sense since most owners charge their EVs at home, and it is much easier to access charging in a driveway or garage of a single-family home than it is to install charging in parking areas in multifamily housing.

Who does the outreach?

One of the keys to success is a vigorous community-based outreach effort. After all, an individual car dealer could simply offer a deep discount on its own, but, what makes these programs different is the ability of trusted messengers—such as local government, environmental groups, utilities, community-based nonprofits, or employers—to reach their constituents.
What types of outreach should we conduct?

These programs have used several outreach strategies. Generally, each program has developed a website that functions both as a source of information and as the portal to sign up for the program.

While the website can give people important details, other tools are needed to inform people about the program and guide them to the website. In the Boulder program, for example, approximately half of the participants who purchased an EV heard about the program from other sources and went directly to the dealer without even signing up on the website.

For reaching the general public, existing programs have used some of the following strategies:

- Press releases or other newspaper outreach
- Social media
- Newsletters
  - Leverage existing services (utility companies, business chambers, recreation centers, special interest groups, open space or energy, schools)
- Partners
  - Share program with partners and ask them to disseminate information to their customers
- Public workshops

In several programs, multiple agencies or individual employers were communicating directly with their own employees about the program using strategies such as:

- Staff leads sharing information
- Email (department, personal, or organization wide)
- Internal newsletters
- Internal workshops highlighting the program and educating employees
- Internal organizations’ websites
- Employee ambassadors or champions

In a survey of Boulder County program participants, newspaper coverage, word of mouth, and employer outreach were the most common ways that participants learned about the program. Boulder County particularly benefitted from a front-page story featured in the local newspaper at the outset of the program. The chart below shows all the ways in which participants learned about the program.
Appendix 3 contains sample outreach materials.

**How do we collect data and evaluate program success?**

It is critical to determine what information is important to you in evaluating the program and to make sure that you have mechanisms built into the program to track this data. The Web portal used to enter the program should be designed to collect as much of this data as possible. In addition, there should be a clear expectation of what data the selected installers and auto dealers will collect, and there should be a common spreadsheet used to track this data, as it is quite likely that there will be customers who hear about the program and go directly to the vendors without entering the Web portal. In the case of the Boulder program, only half of the EV buyers actually used the Web portal.

**Conclusion**

EV and solar group purchase programs have tremendous potential to transform your local community, economy, and environment. By following this toolkit as a guide, you'll have the resources available to you to begin and implement a successful group purchase program. For more information, please visit [www.refuelcolorado.com/refuel-colorado-fleets](http://www.refuelcolorado.com/refuel-colorado-fleets).

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Questions about the content should be directed to Will Toor, Transportation Program Director, Southwest Energy Efficiency Project at wtoor@swenergy.org.
Appendix 1 – Sample language for an EV group purchase RFP

This section is intended to give a sample of the types of questions to ask of potential providers for an EV group purchase program. It is not intended to be a full RFP, as RFP requirements will vary based upon each agency’s procurement policies. The language in this RFP is largely drawn from an RFP used by the University of Utah and Utah Clean Energy; however, it has been modified both to remove specific references, and based on lessons learned from the Boulder County and Northern Colorado programs. We would like to thank the University of Utah and Utah Clean Energy for sharing their RFP language.

SECTION 1 - PURPOSE OF RFP

1.1 Purpose of RFP

The purpose of this Request for Proposals ("RFP") is to facilitate a manufacturer/dealer discount for purchases of battery-electric and/or plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (hereafter referred to as "EVs") by members of the community. The agency is using an RFP process to facilitate the implementation of this manufacturer/dealer discount for affiliated individuals, but individuals interested in taking advantage of this discount, and not the agency, will be purchasing and paying for the EVs. For this reason, this process is not governed by the agency’s procurement policies and is not subject to protest or appeal. The agency intends to select up to one or more manufacturers/dealers offering EVs for participation in this discount program. Each selected entity will be required to enter into an agreement with the agency (referred to below as the “Contract”), wherein the selected company agrees to participate in the discount program. The companies submitting proposals in response to this RFP will hereafter be referred to as "supplier(s)". The agency is examining several alternatives of providing this program and may decide, after reviewing proposals submitted, not to enter into any agreement.

1.2 Background

The agency desires to provide members of the community with the opportunity to purchase an EV at a discounted price. The objective is to help buyers purchase an electric vehicle at a lower cost, which in turn will reduce local and regional air emissions. The agency intends to promote the discount program and the services of selected suppliers(s) as part of the discount program.

SECTION 2 – RFP DETAILS

2.1 Important Dates

The following dates are significant for this RFP:

- RFP Dated and Issued
- RFP Inquiry Questions Due
Proposal Due Date

2.2 Contract Period and Effective Date

The anticipated Contract term will be for a period of two months. The anticipated effective date of the Contract is _______________.

SECTION 3 – SCOPE OF WORK

3.1 Scope of Work Overview

The purpose of agency EVs program is to facilitate a manufacturer/dealer discount for members of the community that is more favorable than other discounts and pricing available to participants during the program period. The selected supplier(s) will provide a discounted pricing on selected makes and models of EVs. The selected supplier(s) will generate price quotes and offer financing services for both purchases and leases of EVs in accordance with the scope of work outlined below.

Individuals who wish to participate in the discount program will sign a contract with the selected supplier(s) for the purchase of an EV. The agency will not be party to this contract and will have no responsibility or liability under this contract.

The program is outlined in terms of the following key phases, described further below:

- Participant Enrollment & Education
- Participant Engagement
- Program Completion & Assessment
- Anticipated Program Timeline

3.2 Participant Enrollment & Education

It is currently anticipated that between the public launch of this discount program and the close of it, the agency will:

- Provide ongoing content management for a website customized for the purpose of promoting the discount program and maintain a social media presence;
- Conduct significant outreach including press releases, workshops, use of social media, and communication with its own employees;
- Maintain a database of customers who sign up on the website, and provide daily updates to the selected suppliers with names and contact information;
- Serve as the point of contact for inquiries about the discount program and field questions about the program.
The selected supplier(s) will:

- Receive contact information from the online signup database
- For interested customers who directly approach the supplier without first registering online, the supplier will collect all of the information needed for an online registration
- Attend workshops and present technical information about EVs.
- Attend other outreach events as requested.
- Participate in media events and interviews as requested.
- Assist with development of collateral materials or presentations.
- Assist with development of survey questions.
- Participate in semi-weekly phone calls with the agency to provide status updates and pertinent information, including: number of inquiries, number of final quotes, number of contracts signed, and any relevant issues, challenges, and/or delays.
- Coordinate with the agency to track participant progress, including those who went directly to the supplier, using a cloud-based database, and update the database at minimum three times per week
- Ask each participant to fill out an online survey developed by the agency
- Communicate regularly with the agency until all purchases are finalized.
- Participate in an Exit Interview and provide feedback on the program

3.3 Participant Engagement

The participant engagement phase is concurrent with participant enrollment and education phase. As eligible participants are referred to the selected supplier(s) or directly approach the supplier(s), the selected supplier(s) will communicate with participants directly to provide each with purchase information and a quote. Purchases can begin as early as the date of the official public launch of the discount program, and will continue until the end of the discount program.

3.3.1 Individual Program Quotes

The selected supplier(s) will prepare an individual quote for each assigned participant that is based on the discounted price and takes into consideration the preferences of the assigned participant.

3.3.2 Individual EV Contracts

Upon receipt of their individualized quote, each participant who decides to purchase an EV must sign a contract with the supplier that reflects the pricing and other provisions applicable to the discount program. This contract is strictly between the supplier and the participant. The agency will not be a party to these contracts or be responsible for any financial or other obligations related to the individual contracts between participants and the selected suppliers.

3.3.3 Enrollment Period Communication

The agency and the selected supplier(s) will coordinate regularly to track assigned participant status throughout the enrollment and education period. The agency will field
calls from participants about the program and answer questions or refer individuals to the selected suppliers for more information, as appropriate.

3.4 Program Completion and Assessment

After the end of the program, the selected suppliers will report on all purchases made through the program, including name, address, email address, phone number, make and model sold or leased, and price. The suppliers shall also provide a list of all customers who entered the program but did not complete a lease or sale.

3.5 Anticipated Program Timeline

- Launch of Website and Pre-Enrollment Process
- Official Launch of EV Discount Program
- Participant Enrollment and Education Period
- Final Deadline to Join EV Discount Program
- Program Completion and Assessment Period

Please note that the anticipated program timeline is an approximation and final dates and length of the program may be adjusted as necessary.

SECTION 4 – PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

4.1 Demonstrated Ability to Meet Scope of Work

The applicant(s) profile should address the following components:

- Firm size.
- Ability to serve the needs of the community. Scoring preference will be given to firms who have demonstrated experience working in the geographic area of the program area and can demonstrate sufficient inventory for the program.
- Proposed vehicle(s), including year(s), make(s), and model(s) to be included in program, including total number of each type of vehicle that is expected to be available during the program.
- Plan for implementation, including sales agents made available to work with those in the program and expected delivery schedules for vehicles.
- Proposed approach to maintain high quality customer service throughout the program. Include a contingency plan if demand is higher than expected and exceeds available inventory.
- Identify any possible challenges you may encounter during this process and how you plan to address them.
- Provide samples of all standard agreements and other associated paperwork that would be presented to purchaser of an EV through this program.
4.2 Qualifications and Expertise of Staff

All respondents must adhere to the following minimum qualifications; any respondents not meeting minimum qualifications will not be considered. Please provide applicable license numbers for all contractors who will be involved in the program.

- Respondents must be licensed, and in good standing, to do business in the state. List all applicable business license numbers.
- Respondents must have at least two years of engagement as a manufacturer/dealer of EVs. Specify number of years the firm has been in business under the present name.

In addition to the above minimum requirements, please also provide:

- The composition and structure of the Program Management Team.
- Provide names, titles, and resumes of key staff that will be assigned to the program, indicating their qualifications, experience, and responsibilities as they relate to this initiative.

Selected suppliers shall notify the agency of any changes to key personnel during the program timeline. Provide information about your firm’s participation in training and certification programs related to electric vehicles, as well as any innovative training models that you have deployed, or intend to implement for this program.

4.3 Cost

Provide information about respondent’s current average cost (lease and purchase) for all EVs respondent proposes to include in the program, the MSRP, and the discount amount, as a percentage or as a total dollar amount below MSRP, that respondent will offer to purchasers in the program for both direct purchases and leases. The discount amount does not include any state and federal tax credits for which the customer may qualify. However, any dealer tax credits should be taken into account as part of the lease pricing. Please also indicate the time period that the discount will be available; preference will be given to respondents able to offer a discount over the entire program period.

Please indicate any type of financing or leasing respondent will make available to eligible participants. List any financial partnerships that you have available for participants, as well as the criteria for accessing those financing options. Please be specific about ALL terms, including, but not limited to, interest rates, lease terms, credit qualifications, down payment requirements, etc. and provide sample lease and purchasing agreements.

Please also provide any additional incentives or benefits respondent is willing to make available to the program or to participants in the program. Such incentives include, but are not limited to, free charging, discounts for purchase or installation of home charging, and rebates to customers of sales exceed certain targets.
Appendix 2 – Sample Language for a Solar Group Purchase RFP

This section is intended to give a sample of the types of questions to ask of potential providers for an EV group purchase program. It is not intended to be a full RFP, as RFP requirements will vary based upon each agency’s procurement policies. The language in this RFP is largely drawn from an RFP used by Boulder County for their second round group purchase program, with some minor modifications. We would like to thank Boulder County for sharing their RFP language.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
INSTALLATION OF RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS

SECTION 1 – PURPOSE

The agency is seeking qualified solar firms (“Installer(s)”) to submit proposals for the design, procurement and installation of residential and commercial solar photovoltaic (“PV”) systems based upon the scope of work contained in this Request for Proposals (“RFP”). The intent is to select one to three qualified Installers to provide such services in all utility areas the program area.

This Program will drive adoption of PV projects through a partnership focused on localized marketing and installation efforts, which in turn will help to reduce the cost of solar PV installations within the Program area through a group procurement model.

The agency seeks proposals from Installers that can provide competitive pricing for a direct ownership model using various financing options including but not limited to, cash and loans, a lease or power purchase agreement (“Lease / PPA”) model for residential and commercial systems.

The intent is to provide services to Program participants across the Program area. Installers shall submit proposals for the entire geographic Program area.

The agency will manage the RFP process and be the program administrator of the pooled purchase program. The agency will coordinate with a community evaluation committee to review the Installer proposals. The evaluation committee will select the winning Installer(s). Quality of the proposal, experience, proposed equipment, installation practices, and proposed pricing will all be factors in the selection process.

The agency is pursuing multiple strategies to meet energy and greenhouse reduction goals. One of these strategies includes offering residents and businesses the opportunity to participate in a community wide solar group procurement program. Such programs have historically been successful in driving down system soft costs by aggregating purchasing power and simplifying the process of adoption across an organization or community. For
example, the most recent round of Solar Benefits Colorado administered in the fall of 2015 resulted in over 800 kilowatts of rooftop solar installations.

SECTION 2 – PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

At its core, the program combines four main components:

- **Discounted/Tiered Pricing:** Pre-negotiated group discounts which may increase as more participants sign up within the target communities (i.e., bulk purchasing—a bid can offer a fixed discount, or one where the more home or business owners that purchase solar systems through the program, the lower the price for everyone in the community that participates).

- **Community-Driven Outreach:** These methods may include but are not limited to social media campaigns, internal communication channels used by outreach stakeholder organizations, tabling at local events, workshops/presentations.

- **Competitively-Selected Installer(s):** Through a competitive bidding process, volunteers from participating communities elected to an evaluation committee select an Installer(s) to service the area throughout the duration of the program. This saves the selected Installer(s) marketing costs related to customer acquisition and saves the consumer the effort of finding a reputable, price competitive Installer(s).

- **Limited Time Offer:** Group purchase programs are limited time offers. The limited time nature of the program motivates participants to act promptly, or risk missing the window of opportunity to install solar PV at a reduced rate.

The basic cost savings from the Program result from a coordinated education, promotion, and outreach effort and from the tiered pricing arrangement ($/watt or incentive rebate) which takes advantage of economies of scale.

By educating the local community, streamlining marketing efforts, and aggregating sales, this program will help make solar PV a more accessible and affordable energy option. We are hoping that the selected installer will begin _____ and end _____ with the opportunity to extend the deadline if needed/requested. The Program timeline may be changed if agreed upon by the agency and the selected Installer(s).

SECTION 3 – PROGRAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Lead agency

The lead agency will act as the Program Administrator. Specifically, the agency will:

- Manage the administration of the Program, including the RFP process, proposal evaluation with an evaluation committee and contract negotiations with selected Installer(s);
- Support other entities participating in the program and their community outreach stakeholders with standardized marketing materials, outreach and education to
engage participants in the Program;
- Enable participant registration;
- Convene weekly conference calls between the lead agency and the Installer(s) to coordinate 1) outreach activities and 2) Program status updates.

The lead agency will identify outreach partners in their community (e.g. employers, nonprofit organizations, neighborhood associations, faith based groups, etc.) and use approved communication channels to promote the Program to their residents. The agency does not endorse any Installer and will not endorse the selected Installer(s). Any participant who enters into the Program does so in their personal capacity and at his/her own risk and will expressly hold each of the participating local government organizations harmless from any liability associated with their decision to participate in this Program for services for their project.

Please note: The lead agency will promote the Installer(s) as having been selected to perform turnkey solar energy services. However, the lead agency and its local government partners as entities do not endorse any Installer(s) over another and will not endorse the selected Installer(s). The agency is not responsible for the contract that is entered into by the selected Installer(s) and Program participants. Finally, the Installer(s) will waive and release the lead agency and its Program partners (including each participating local government and their community outreach partners), from any and all claims and causes of action arising out of the Program.

3.2 Installer

In order to participate in the Program, the Installer must provide a competitive dollar per watt ($/watt) “Purchase Price” for solar PV systems as well as financing options including a Lease / PPA and/or loans. In addition, Installers are encouraged to offer an alternative volume rebate based on total contracted capacity of solar PV (ex. 100 kilowatts of contracted capacity goal achieved results in a $0.10/watt rebate and 400kW + results in a $0.25/watt rebate; OR $500 rebate for each participant who completes an installation). For the commercial offering, installers must provide a competitive generic maximum dollar per watt ($/watt) estimate up front, before customers are identified, for marketing purposes. This rate should scale down as number of participants increases.

Proposals may include solutions and pricing for battery storage to be coupled with residential or commercial solar installations.

In addition, the agency plans to offer a parallel program offering group purchase of electric vehicles. Solar providers may include pricing for electric vehicle charging as part of their FRP submittal.

Proposals will not only be evaluated on the Installer’s ability to provide the highest quality design and installation services, but also on the ability to deliver competitively discounted pricing with volume rebates for the purchase and financing of systems.
The selected Installer(s) will provide no cost / obligation site assessments, with site visits or desktop analysis, as appropriate, different ownership (or financing) models, and installation services to Program participants. Program participants with sites that are deemed feasible for a solar PV project will have the option to contract with the selected Installer(s) before the program deadline. The Installer(s) will be the technical expert responsible for assessing individual sites, working with interested Program participants to design appropriate systems, and contracting with Program participants for installation of solar PV systems.

Installer(s) will be required to contract with the lead agency to participate. It is essential, in order to meet the program goals and timelines, that Installers are prepared to execute a contract with the lead agency soon after their selection. Therefore, each applicant Installer must review the Terms and Conditions outlined in the DRAFT Contract (Exhibit D) and provide comments on those Terms and Conditions at the time of application.

SECTION 4 – PROJECT SPECIFICATIONS

4.1 Program Timeline

Below are the major deadlines for the group purchase program:
- RFP Announced
- RFP Questions due in Writing
- Response to Questions (Addendum to RFP)
- Proposals Due
- Program Opens to Public
- Registration Ends
- Participant Deadline to Sign Installer Contract
- Installations Completion Goal
4.2 Program Area

The program is available to residents within the program area with targeted outreach being conducted by the lead agency. There are ____ electric utilities within the program area, all with varying incentives for rooftop solar, therefore, proposals should indicate if all service territories can be served, and if not, which service territories cannot be served and why.

4.3 Proposal Instructions

a) Executive Summary (REQUIRED Narrative - No more than 1 page)
   The Executive Summary shall discuss the highlights; key features and distinguishing points of the Proposal, as well as any unique problems perceived by the Installer and proposed solutions. The Executive Summary must be prepared and signed by a manager having the authority to make offers and enter into agreements on behalf of the Installer. Installers are welcome to partner, but one Installer must be the lead company on the proposal.

b) Qualifications of the Project Team (REQUIRED Narrative)
   Describe in more detail the applying Installer(s) ability to manage the potential demand of Solar Benefits Colorado, based on your size capacity. Please discuss how your experience on previous projects (residential and / or commercial) relates to the Program.

   Identify the key project team members by name / position and provide experience including but not limited to, partners assisting in project financing, customer service, outreach, project engineering, design and installations.

   Discuss Installers employment practices (including apprenticeship and mentoring) as well as corporate sustainability and environmentally preferable procurement activities. Specifically, please describe how your firm will manage equipment at the end of its useful life (ex. does PV module manufacturer or installer have a cradle-to-cradle lifecycle guarantee / recycling plan).

   Provide a description of Installers health and safety record and practices

c) Scope of Services and Schedule (REQUIRED Narrative)
   Provide a narrative that outlines a detailed strategy that should at a minimum address the following items:

   Outline what Installers current average installation cost for direct purchased residential and / or commercial system in Program area is. Please provide cost information for both purchased PV systems ($/watt) and Lease/PPA ($/kWh) systems, as applicable.
Program Plan: Provide a plan for implementation for the Scope of Work (Exhibit A), describing the proposing Installer’s ability to provide solar PV installation services to participants during the Program period. Specifically, the proposal should describe the Installer’s ability to provide timely customer service, site assessments, and installation services.

Please elaborate on the specific intake process for Program participant leads, method for screening sites, and an installation schedule. Include an estimate of the number of residential and commercial solar PV projects the Installer team can complete on a monthly basis.

Describe a quality assurance process for the solar PV installations and outline the process for managing any permits, inspections and the interconnection process with the local utility. Finally, outline how the quality of the proposed equipment and installation process will be explained to the Program participant.

Timeline: Provide an expected timeline for the average Program participant registered in the Program to guide participant expectations.

Geographic Proximity: Discuss the Installer’s geographic proximity to the targeted Program area and how this will shape the services provided.

Please describe all financing options Installer will offer Program participants. Include details on credit score requirements, interest rates, terms, and conditions for the various financing product options.

Multi - Family: The majority of participants will be seeking proposals for single-family occupied homes. However, there will likely be interest from participants living in duplexes and condominium buildings. There will also be interest from businesses and nonprofit organizations, which may or may not own their buildings. Please address whether and how your firm handles these types of installations, in terms of building information needed, permissions needed, and any additional costs required.

Proposal for sites that are not feasible for solar PV: Outline the process by which the Installer team will handle leads that do not have feasible sites for solar PV.

Any supplemental offers with pricing for battery storage and/or for electric vehicle charging.
In addition, please include any proposed joint marketing or co-branding efforts you would enter into with one or more selected electric vehicle dealers participating in the group purchasing program.

d) Proposing Firm Profile (REQUIRED)
PLEASE SUBMIT via Exhibit C.1 - Excel (XLS) Format

Please include the number of residential and / or commercial solar installations your company has completed over the past two years, along with the average residential and / or commercial system size (kW) installed.

Describe Installers ratio of part time to full time employees.

Licensing (General)
Colorado does not issue a contractor’s license specific to solar at the state level. However, there are local solar specific requirements in some counties. Contractors need to know and comply with local building codes.

All work performed on the AC side of the inverter must be done by an electrical contractor who employs a licensed Journeyman Electrician or a licensed Residential Wireman who will do the work.

Please note if your Firm is listed on the BBB website. Qualifying firms should be active members of Colorado Solar Energy Industries Association (COSEIA), and agree to COSEIA’s code of ethics.

NABCEP certification in accordance with HB-10-1001 is required. DC Electrical work related to PV installations, the installation of PV modules, and the installation of PV module mounting equipment is subject to on-site supervision by a Certified Photovoltaic Energy Practitioner as designated by NABCEP or other nationally recognized professional organization designated by the Colorado State Electrical Board.

The performance of all photovoltaic electrical work, the installation of photovoltaic module mounting equipment shall be subject to on-site supervision by a certified photovoltaic energy practitioner as designated by NABCEP or another nationally recognized professional organization designated by the Colorado State Electrical Board by rule.

Contractors shall be insured and bonded. Please submit documentation reflecting your Firm’s current insurance coverage. This may be included in the Appendices of your proposal.
Please provide names, addresses, contact information, and contractor license numbers for all specified subcontractors the Firm currently intends to employ using existing business relationships for the project.

Please provide details regarding average number of systems per week that Installer or subcontractors can complete, for standard installations (i.e. Those with no additional roofing work/panel upgrades/structural reinforcement/tree trimming/ etc.).

Please describe the minimum / maximum system size (in kW) to be installed for Program participants as part of the Program. Note: The program will have an electric vehicle component.

Provide references for at least five (5) of its projects.

Pricing Proposal (REQUIRED) - PLEASE SUBMIT as part of your proposal as a XLS

Outline the discounted Purchase Price, the discounted Lease/PPA Price (if financing option is offered), and the additional financial incentive based on Program installation capacity milestones that you will provide (to residential participants) for the Program on the Pricing Proposal Financial incentive for Program installation capacity milestones can include, though is not limited to, a rebate, gift card, or other financial incentive.

If offered, the Lease/PPA price should assume the customer is putting no money down for a system that will produce 90 percent of optimal production, and should be presented on a $/kWh basis if possible. For third-party ownership offerings that are a fixed monthly payment (i.e. $/month), the payment should be translated into a $/kWh price for means of comparison. Please include the Lease/PPA term (in years), and any annual rate escalator (%), if applicable.

Pricing proposals must represent the total installation costs (“turn-key”) for a residential and / or commercial solar PV system. This should include system design; permit allowance, applicable materials and equipment, transportation, labor, and all equipment and workmanship warranties. The price should be independent of any sales tax or any state or federal tax credits or incentives available to Program participants.

System Specifications: The Program is interested in high quality as well as cost competitive equipment. Identify system specifications for equipment that will be used for projects going through the Program, including equipment manufacturers, models (ex. module wattages, efficiencies), and warranties for modules, inverters, racking, meters, and data acquisition
systems, if applicable. Please include details in your proposal about applicable labor and roof penetration warranties as well. Production guarantees in addition to product warranties are encouraged.

Proposed modules and inverters shall be listed as eligible equipment on the California Energy Commission (CEC) GoSolarCalifornia website:

http://www.gosolarcalifornia.ca.gov/links/equipment_links.php

Please include these system specifications

Price Contingencies (Adders): It is understood that features of certain installations will result in higher costs. Installers must outline specific electrical, mechanical, structural, equipment, site, or labor features that will result in greater costs. The agency will not recognize any project related cost adders if they are not outlined in at the time of the proposal. Installers will be responsible for identifying individual projects that trigger additional pricing and will itemize adders on a Program participant’s proposal for transparency.

Participant Proposals: All proposals provided to Program participants shall itemize the cost of each technology option if more than one is offered (example: mid-efficiency vs. high efficiency modules or central inverter vs. micro-inverters) and any adders that may be needed to complete a participant’s project. Levelized costs of electricity (LCOEs) in $/kWh shall be provided for each equipment & finance combination, to allow for directly comparable evaluation of options by each participant. Applicable state and federal incentives should also be included on individual participants’ quotes.

APPENDICES: SUPPORTING INFORMATION
The Appendices shall include any required supporting information, such as sample customer contracts, and equipment cut sheets that support your Firm’s proposal. You many also include optional information like team resumes, copies of license certificates, and customer process flow-charts, etc.

e) PROPOSAL EVALUATION
All proposals must meet Program objectives and must be responsive to the relevant scope of work and proposal requirements outlined above. Proposals will be evaluated on the general criteria below:

Threshold Requirements: Applications must meet a threshold review before they will be provided to the volunteer evaluation team. To meet the threshold review, proposals must include the following: Installer has demonstrated significant experience installing residential and commercial PV systems;
Completed (and signed, where applicable) Exhibits

Purchase Price option (presented as a $/watt price) and corresponding financial incentive(s), along with clear pricing ($/kWh for Lease/PPAs) and terms and conditions (including length in years, and escalator, if applicable) for any additional financing options being offered.

The proposed Purchase Price to Program participants must be discounted off the current installation cost in the Program area

Identify any project price adders and the range of any price escalators;

A template copy of a direct purchase contract as well as any necessary agreements (loan, lease or PPA) for any additional financing options offered, specifying the terms and conditions;

Identification of third-party partners that enable the additional financing options (Loan and / or Lease / PPA)

Once an Installer proposal passes the threshold review based on the requirements listed in this RFP, the volunteer community evaluation team based on the following criteria will evaluate the proposals:

- Overall quality and value: overall quality of proposal and specified equipment;
- Experience: degree of Installer's experience and proficiency in the scope of work, including demonstrated experience in developing, designing and installing residential and commercial solar PV systems. In addition, experience of Installer team (if applying in partnership with other companies).
- Implementation: ability to provide timely, quality customer service and installations within the geographic scope of Program.
- Price structure: quality and simplicity of pricing proposal for both Purchase ($/W) and any additional financing options along with their corresponding financial incentives. In addition, the value offered by the proposed equipment, price adders, price escalators, and contract terms and conditions will be considered.
Appendix 3 – Sample Outreach Materials

These are samples drawn from the Solar Benefits Colorado program held in the Boulder County/Adams County/Denver area in fall of 2015, administered by Boulder County and Vote Solar. We would like to thank Boulder County for sharing these materials.

SECTION 1 – PRESS MATERIALS

1.1 Sample Press Release

Front Range Counties Partner to Help Residents Save on Solar or Electric Vehicles

Boulder County, Colo. – Adams, Boulder and Denver Counties are teaming up to launch Solar Benefits Colorado, a first-of-its-kind community discount program that will make it easier and more affordable for Front Range homeowners to go solar and all residents to purchase or lease an electric vehicle.

“Many of our residents want to save money, reduce fossil fuel dependence and clean up our air quality with solar and electric vehicles but may have questions or are daunted by the purchasing process. Solar Benefits Colorado is a great opportunity for Front Range families explore whether either option is right for their household. The City of XX is excited to be part of this innovative community wide program.”

Solar Benefits Colorado enables residents to pool their buying power to lower the price of investing in solar, electric vehicles or both. The 2015 program is available for homeowners living in metro areas of the Northern Front Range.

Solar Installation
Qualified homeowners receive a no-cost, no-obligation site evaluation to determine if their home is suitable for solar. Homeowners will then work with a local solar installer, Sunrun, who was selected by the program’s community evaluation committee. Compounding multiple customer installations under one umbrella – Solar Benefits Colorado – allows Sunrun to offer discounted, “bulk” pricing and an added incentive. To take advantage of the volume discount, participants must sign a contract with Sunrun by November 6, 2015. Residents can request their home evaluation on the Solar Benefits Colorado website.
Electric Vehicle Purchase or Lease
The same “bulk” purchasing premise is at play with the purchase or lease of electric vehicles, as it is with solar installations. Boulder Nissan was selected as the primary dealer working with Solar Benefits Colorado to offer volume discounts. To take advantage of discounted pricing for the Nissan Leaf, residents must obtain a promotional code by signing up on the program website and taking it to Boulder Nissan by September 30th.

“Solar Benefits Colorado is helping these communities build awareness, lower solar costs, and lead on climate action in one fell swoop. We are proud to be working with these cities to help their residents build a resilient energy system and improve air quality and human health one rooftop or car at a time,” said Jessie Denver, program administrator with the nonprofit organization Vote Solar.

The newly announced 2015 program builds on the success of a 2013-14 Solar Benefits Colorado pilot group-buy program. The pilot program engaged over 1,700 local residents who were employees of major employers in the area. These homeowners contracted almost 1 megawatt of new residential solar capacity in 4 months. Based on the overwhelming success of the pilot program, the electric vehicle option will be offered for the first time in the U.S. in the expanded community wide 2015 program.

For more information, visit www.MyGroupEnergy.com/colorado.

Extra Quotes:

“Solar is our nation’s fastest growing source of new electric generation, but many homeowners still feel overwhelmed by the process or cost of going solar. That’s why the City/County of XX has teamed up with neighboring communities to offer Solar Benefits Colorado and make it easy for our residents to connect with affordable solar power,” said XX.

“Solar Benefits Colorado is a great opportunity for local residents to be on the cutting edge of a new choice in electricity generation,” said XXXX. “We choose our cell phone and cable providers, why not our electricity? By aggregating homeowners we can reduce the cost, making solar simple and more affordable than ever. We want to help inform residents about the economic benefits of solar and know that each new installation will help reduce the carbon footprint of the city/county, while adding to the overall resiliency of our grid. The City of XX is excited to work with our program partners to expand this program so more front-range homeowners can participate.”
1.2 Sample Press Coverage

**Boulder Daily Camera**  
POSTED 08/25/2015 05:53:05 PM MDT

**Boulder County to Offer Discounted Solar Panels, Electric Cars**  
Boulder teaming up with Adams and Denver counties to leverage buying power

*By Jerd Smith  
Business Editor*

Michelle Daigle pulls the charging cord on her newly leased Nissan Leaf as Sara Cashin, Boulder Nissan’s finance manager, looks on Tuesday. The Solar Benefits Colorado program offers residents roughly $8,300 off the cost of a Nissan Leaf. *(Paul Aiken / Staff Photographer)*

Boulder County is joining with Adams and Denver counties to offer residents the opportunity to purchase discounted home solar systems and electric vehicles.

The Solar Benefits Colorado program, launched this week, offers homeowners an estimated 15 percent discount on solar rooftop systems and roughly $8,300 off the cost of a Nissan Leaf, according to Brad Smith, a sustainability specialist for Boulder County.
The initiative grew out of a similar program that Boulder and Denver counties offered their employees in 2013, Smith said. "We wanted to help folks find a more simple, more affordable way of paying for renewable energy," he said.

The three counties have selected Sunrun Solar, a national solar installer, to provide systems to homeowners and Boulder Nissan to run the discounted car program, Smith said.

According to the county, multiple vendors were vetted before Sunrun and Boulder Nissan were selected. Nigel Zeid, electric vehicle specialist and sales consultant at Boulder Nissan, said the dealership wanted to participate to get more innovative electric cars on the road.

"People look at $32,000 (the Leaf's sticker price) and say, 'That's a lot.' We wanted to team up to make this appealing to normal folks," he said.

Officials at Sunrun could not be reached for comment.

The program, essentially a bulk-discount initiative, isn't receiving county, state or federal funding. Instead, the counties have negotiated deals with the vendors, who were willing to lower their prices in exchange for winning the business of a larger number of customers, Smith said.

"This offer is great because local governments and employers don't have to spend any taxpayer dollars. We are simply leveraging our relationships across the Front Range to pool our buying power to lower the price of solar and electric vehicles," he said.

"This is an opportunity to scale up a program that Boulder County has done on a pilot scale and offer it to a larger population, which will have much greater potential environmental impacts." The three-county initiative comes as Colorado continues to be among the national leaders in adopting use of renewable technologies. According to a February report from the Golden-based National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Colorado ranks seventh in the country for electric vehicle sales per capita, with 0.02 vehicles sold per person. Hawaii ranks No. 1, with 1.03 electric vehicles per person.

Joyce McLaren, an NREL policy analyst specializing in residential solar issues, said she hadn't heard of a program like this until now. Consumers can purchase either a rooftop system or an electric vehicle, but they're not required to purchase both if they choose to participate in the program. Still, McLaren said more people were thinking about electric vehicle purchases in tandem with residential solar because the systems could complement each other. "It's great to see lots of different models being used because you're able to reach a broader audience," she said.
Smith said the three counties hope the discount program generates an additional 500 residential solar installations by the time the program ends in early November. Xcel Energy, the state’s largest electric utility, had 25,753 residential rooftop systems in place as of the end of May, according to the Colorado Public Utilities Commission. The program hasn’t set a goal for electric vehicle sales.

Consumers have until Sept. 30 to purchase or lease a car and until Oct. 31 to sign up for the solar rooftop program. Solar contracts must be in place by Nov. 8. Check mygroupenergy.com for more information.

Jerd Smith: 303-473-1332, smithj@dailycamera.com

SECTION 2 – DIRECT MARKETING

2.1 Sample Email

We invite you to join us in participating in Solar Benefits Colorado, a community-wide program designed to make it easier and more affordable for residents to go solar or purchase an electric vehicle.

Solar Benefits Colorado will help your workforce / members / pool their buying power to go solar and drive electric at a discount. We can reduce the cost and complexity of going solar, increase the number of electric vehicles in our communities, increase the amount of clean energy powering our communities, and drive progress toward our region’s climate goals.

What is Solar Benefits Colorado?
This summer, City/County XX, in partnership with neighboring communities throughout the Front Range and nonprofit Vote Solar, is launching a solar group-purchasing program for local homeowners, which allows the solar industry to offer more competitive pricing. The selected Solar Benefits Colorado solar Installer, Sunrun, will also offer additional rebates for increased savings to homeowners.

Electric Vehicles!
Solar Benefits Colorado has also selected a local EV dealership for the program! This is a first of its kind group EV pilot and we are excited to help residents lease or buy the best-selling EV in the U.S. at an incredible discount. The selected dealer, Boulder Nissan, is offering deep discounts on 2015 Nissan Leafs.

Like other local government education programs, Solar Benefits Colorado will take advantage of a coordinated community outreach effort that engages municipal leaders, major employers and community groups to reach homeowners. We would like to work with...
your organization to extend the program’s reach and improve the program’s impact.

**How You Can Help?**
Just help us spread the word! Let your members / employees (choose what is applicable) know about Solar Benefits Colorado, and the City/County and its partners will do the rest. The City and its partners will make it easy by providing marketing materials, leading informational events and managing the solar RFP process. **It’s an easy way to show your organization’s commitment to the health and sustainability of your community!**

If you’d like to learn more about how your organization can take part, please email [Insert local contact].

2.2 Sample Facebook Posts

a) **Colorado residents: Join your neighbors and plug into the sun this summer!**

   Communities throughout Adams, Boulder and Denver have partnered to help homeowners reduce the cost and complexity of going solar with their friends and neighbors. Don’t do solar alone - sign up with Solar Benefits Colorado and save on your utility bills for years to come!

b) **Colorado residents: Join your neighbors in never paying for gas again!**

   Communities throughout Adams, Boulder and Denver have partnered to help residents get into an electric car. If you’ve been thinking about electrifying your commute with an EV, Solar Benefits Colorado has a first of its kind group deal for purchasing an electric vehicle! Visit [www.mygroupenergy.com/colorado](http://www.mygroupenergy.com/colorado) to learn more.
We’re excited to share Solar Benefits Colorado with you. Through Solar Benefits Colorado, Boulder County employees are able to purchase solar panels for their home or the Nissan Leaf at some of the best discounted rates available in the U.S. And experts with Sunrun will walk you through the solar planning, financing and installation process.

On Friday, September 25th Boulder County will host a workshop in the Commissioners’ Hearing Room at 1325 Pearl Street. Learn more about rooftop solar and electric vehicles, hear from the selected providers, have your questions answered, and schedule your consultation. More information can be found below.

**Sign Up**

It’s easy to sign up and requires no obligation whatsoever. After you submit some basic contact information, you will be connected with the Sunrun team to schedule your site evaluation and/or given a coupon code to be used at the selected Nissan dealership.

Sign up on the Solar Benefits Colorado website [mygroupenergy.com/colorado](http://mygroupenergy.com/colorado)
**Limited Time**

**Time is limited.** The discounted solar rates will only be offered until November 6, and the electric vehicle discount will only be offered until October 31. **Act now!**

**Share It**

**Spread the word.** Please help inform your co-workers, friends, and family of this limited-time discount.

**Learn More**

**Attend a workshop.**
When: September 25th from 9-10am  
Where: Commissioners Hearing Room at 1325 Pearl Street, Boulder  
Snacks will be served

**About the program.** This was offered in 2013 to employees of select governments. It was such a success we decided to do it again offering better deals to a wider audience.

This is a chance to be part of a program offered to residents and employees along the Front Range. Together we can plug into the sun to power our community with clean energy – faster.

Visit the [Solar Benefits Colorado](#) website to sign up and learn even more.

If you’ve been thinking about installing solar at your home or purchasing/leasing an electric vehicle, we hope you’re as thrilled about this program as we are. If you have any questions, please contact your program administrator at _______________.

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Solar energy and electric vehicles (EV) give us the opportunity to become energy independent, and now Boulder County employees have the opportunity to **buy or lease** rooftop solar and/or an EV at a discounted price.

**This is the Deal of 2015 for Residential Rooftop Solar**
For a limited time, you can receive a home evaluation to see if solar is right for you. Local installation firm Sunrun has been selected by a community evaluation committee and they provide a no-cost opportunity assessment.

- Discounted pricing on high efficiency equipment and turnkey solar installations (including all permitting costs) below market rate
- Reduced complexity, streamlined process
- Get a $500 rebate (Visa gift card) from Sunrun
- Take advantage of the 30% federal tax credit **before it expires** in 2016
- **Please note:** You do not need to buy/lease an EV to take advantage of the solar component of the program.
- Don’t delay, this offer expires Nov. 6th, 2015!

**Save Money on your Commute with an EV!**
You may also sign up to be connected to local EV dealer Boulder Nissan who is offering discounted pricing on three models of the best-selling EV in the U.S., the Leaf.

- State ($5,000) & Federal tax credits ($7,500) are available for the Nissan Leaf.
- **Please note:** You do not need to install solar to take advantage of the EV component of the program.
- Just a month away, this offer expires Sep. 30th, 2015!

**Boulder County Makes it Easy**
Solar is the fastest growing source of energy in America and EVs help clean up our air quality and put money back in your pocket. But many homeowners may feel overwhelmed by the process and cost. That’s why Boulder County has launched Solar Benefits Colorado, a program that pools the buying power of employees and residents to make going solar and/or electrifying your commute easier and more affordable than ever.
2.5 Sample Employee Newsletter

**Don’t get left in the dust when the Electric Vehicle deal drives away!**

Right now, through Solar Benefits Colorado, you can purchase a Nissan LEAF for 25% off MSRP or lease it at a discounted rate. Sweeten the deal even more by:

- Taking advantage of Federal ($7,500) and State ($5,000) tax incentives
- Getting 24 months of complimentary charging when you purchase or lease (a value of up to $1,012).
- Never purchasing gas again!

Example:

- 2015 Nissan Leaf S with Quick Charge Package - MSRP: $31,810 plus fees and taxes
- **SBCO negotiated price: $23,461 plus fees and taxes (26% off MSRP!)**
- This discount DOES NOT include Federal and State Electric Vehicle tax credits (up to $12,500) which could lower your final cost to $10,961

Due to high demand, Nissan has agreed to extend the offer until October 31st.

“Buying the Nissan Leaf through Solar Benefits Colorado was simple. Not having to worry about negotiating the price made this the easiest purchase ever! And Nigel at Boulder Nissan is so knowledgeable about the Leaf; he stayed late on Saturday evening to spend all the time I needed to understand how to use the car.”

- Michelle Krezek, Commissioners’ Office

“We have wanted to get an electric car for some time now but we just couldn't make it work financially. Solar Benefits Colorado removed these barriers and made it practical and easy for us to purchase an electric vehicle. We’re very happy with our new Nissan Leaf!”

- Vivienne Jannatpour, Parks and Open Space