



Consent Item 10

To:	Ava Community Energy Authority
From:	Forrest Csulak, Distributed Energy Resources (DERs) Associate
Subject:	Approval of Consulting Services Agreement with ICF
Date:	September 18, 2024

Summary/Recommendation

This memo proposes executing a consulting services agreement with ICF Resources, LLC (ICF) for a term of three years to assist with our Solar and Storage program design process.

Financial Impact

This agreement will be paid based on delivery milestones and have a not-to-exceed ("NTE") budget of \$350,000. The funds for this work will come from the approximately \$20 million budget authorization to develop and execute the solar and storage incentive program.

Analysis and Context

In April 2024, Ava's Board of Directors confirmed the allocation of 40% of Ava's forecasted 2023-2024 revenue surplus, or approximately \$20 million, to support a solar and storage incentive program. This program will promote new solar and storage installations across our residential customers (market rate and CARE/FERA) and community-benefiting resilience hubs. In June 2024, Ava's Board of Directors approved a contract with Lunar Energy to be our Distributed Energy Resources Management System ("DERMS") provider. Lunar's DERMS platform, Gridshare, will enable us to verify in real-time that the proper equipment is installed, online, and optimizes customers' batteries for customer and grid benefits.

Our solar and storage program proposes to feature both an upfront and a monthly ongoing participation incentive to encourage both initial installations and ongoing battery participation in our solar and storage program. Upfront incentives are proposed to be open to customers, who

install a new battery-backed solar system or retrofit an existing solar system with a battery. Ongoing incentives will be available to these customers and those with existing battery-backed solar systems, which they want to bring to the program. Ava is planning to launch this program in Q1 2025, though many program design elements are still in development. The Local Programs team has been engaging with the solar and storage industry on these design choices, yet additional development is needed to arrive at a program design that benefits our customers, the solar industry, and Ava.

To help us develop a comprehensive program that provides the greatest benefits to our customers and the solar industry, we need a consultant with Distributed Energy Resources (“DER”)-based program design experience, a deep knowledge of the current solar and battery market, and strong ties to the industry. We requested written quotes and scope from qualified vendors, obtaining written proposals from six parties. After thoroughly reviewing each of these proposals, we recommend selecting ICF due to their vast experience with developing similar programs for utilities and their team’s deep connections to the solar and battery industry. We are in the final stage of negotiating the contract with ICF.

When contracted, ICF will be responsible at a minimum for:

- Developing recommendations for program rules based on market and industry knowledge, including engagement with solar industry;
- Market research as directed by Ava to inform program design choices;
- Developing a program manual for internal usage by the program team and its partners;
- Conducting contractor training for accurately representing our program to customers and properly connecting battery systems to Lunar’s Gridshare platform.

Ava staff recommends a three-year contract with ICF.

Attachment:

- A. Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. R-2024-XX
A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF AVA COMMUNITY ENERGY AUTHORITY APPROVING A CONSULTING
SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH ICF for SOLAR AND STORAGE PROGRAM
DESIGN

WHEREAS Ava Community Energy Authority (“Ava”) was formed as a community choice aggregation agency (“CCA”) on December 1, 2016, under the Joint Exercise of Powers Act, California Government Code sections 6500 *et seq.*, among the County of Alameda, and the Cities of Albany, Berkeley, Dublin, Emeryville, Fremont, Hayward, Livermore, Piedmont, Oakland, San Leandro, and Union City to study, promote, develop, conduct, operate, and manage energy-related climate change programs in all of the member jurisdictions. The cities of Newark and Pleasanton, located in Alameda County, along with the City of Tracy, located in San Joaquin County, were added as members of Ava and parties to the Joint Powers Agreement (“JPA”) in March of 2020. The city of Stockton was added as a member to Ava in September of 2022. The city of Lathrop was added as a member to Ava in October of 2023. San Joaquin County was added as a member to Ava in July 2024. On October 24, 2023, Ava legally adopted the name Ava Community Energy Authority, where it had previously used the name East Bay Community Energy Authority since its inception.

WHEREAS Ava is currently designing a Solar & Storage incentive program to promote new solar and storage installations across our residential customers and resilience hubs;

WHEREAS Ava has been engaging with the solar and storage industry on program design options and requires additional consultation to develop a program manual;

WHEREAS Ava staff requested written quotes for a defined scope of services from qualified vendors, obtained written proposals from six parties, and recommends working with ICF due to their vast experience developing similar programs for utilities and their deep connections to the solar industry; and

WHEREAS Ava is aiming to launch our solar & storage program in Q1 2025. To meet this timeline, it is critical that we bring in a qualified consultant as soon as possible, so they can fully support our program design process.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF AVA COMMUNITY ENERGY AUTHORITY DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Approve recommendation authorizing the CEO to negotiate and execute, in consultation with Ava staff and legal counsel, a Consulting Services Agreement with ICF to provide consulting services to develop Ava’s solar and storage incentive program.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED this 18th day of September 2024.

Jack Balch, Chair

ATTEST:

Adrian Bankhead, Clerk of the Board