

Supporting Transportation Electrification – Leadership, Learning, Assistance, and Resources (STELLAR) Request for Proposals

STELLAR (Supporting Transportation Electrification – Leadership, Learning, Assistance, and Resources) is an initiative dedicated to promoting equitable transportation decarbonization by engaging directly with Chicago community-based organizations (CBOs) with support from the [Center for Neighborhood Technology \(CNT\)](#), [Illinois Alliance for Clean Transportation](#), [American Lung Association](#), and [Forth](#). STELLAR is supported by the U.S. Department of Energy’s Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) under the Office of Vehicle Technologies Award Number DE-EE0010614.

The goal of the STELLAR program is to increase the participating CBOs’ capacities to engage with the subject matter of electric vehicle (EV) mobility and the EV transition through capacity building. The first phase of STELLAR, taking place from March 2024 to November 2024, has included monthly training sessions for the CBOs to build basic knowledge of the vehicle electrification landscape.

The second phase of the STELLAR initiative will begin in 2025 and involves community outreach and engagement in each of the ten (10) participating CBOs’ communities. To prepare for these outreach activities and events, a local outreach firm will be convened by CNT to assist each of the CBOs with outreach event coordination, marketing strategy, and information-gathering strategies for their respective outreach events. The outreach firm will support the CBOs participating in the second phase of STELLAR by planning and hosting one (1) local outreach event with each CBO (10 events total) that aims to educate the community about EVs, EV charging and charging infrastructure, and other community-specific concerns. The outreach firm will also develop marketing materials and strategy to conduct outreach alongside CBOs to their communities and build connections to local fleets. Altogether, this outreach support is intended to inform a strategic plan that each CBO will create based on community engagement and input.

Full Proposal Deadline:

Final proposals are due by 5 p.m. Central Daylight Time on October 14, 2024 (extended deadline), submitted via email to jhage@cnt.org and msavad@cnt.org. Proposals must be submitted as a PDF attachment. Please write **STELLAR Proposal Submission** in the subject line. Applicants will receive confirmation of receipt via email.

Decision:

If needed, CNT and the STELLAR team reserve the right to have a shortlist of finalists participate in an interview with the STELLAR team to aid with the final decisions. Selected applicants for interviews will be notified by the week of November 11, 2024. Selected applicants for final decision will be notified by December 20, 2024.

Available Funding:

The STELLAR program has budgeted up to \$120,000 for this work.

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Section 1. Request for Proposal

This RFP (Request for Proposal) is to solicit proposals from qualified outreach/communications firms, conduct a fair evaluation based on the criteria listed in the RFP, and select a candidate that best aligns with the needs and goals of the STELLAR initiative. Qualified organizations are those that have demonstrable experience of working with local organizations on outreach projects and events.

The primary goal of this RFP is to procure an outreach firm that can effectively partner with each of the 10 Chicago area CBOS participating in Phase 2 of STELLAR to help plan and execute their community-specific outreach event. The outreach firm will be tasked with assisting each CBO with event logistics and information collection before, during, and after the event, which will help inform the CBOs when developing their community strategic plans. The community strategic plans are envisioned to be light documents that will position each organization to execute on priorities, with elements such as a SWOT (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats) analysis and identification of infrastructure, mobility, and support needs for their community in implementing EV charging infrastructure or EV fleets. Therefore, the outreach firm will be a pivotal resource for each CBO to help add to their capacity and develop an outreach plan that will best fit each CBO's needs in gathering such input from their respective community stakeholders.

Outreach events can range from participating in an existing/standing community event (such as sponsoring a booth at a farmers' market or community fair) to a stand-alone community meeting dedicated to the topic (i.e., traditional open house meeting). Either version of these community outreach events requires two main components:

1. To educate community members on electric mobility; and
2. To learn what aspects of electric mobility community residents support, challenge, and/or prioritize.

Beyond these shared features, the outreach firm will be expected to work with each CBO so that its outreach events can be customized to take advantage of existing local activities, interests, culture, and experience with electric mobility to design an event most useful to that community.

Section 2. Scope of Work, Budget, and Deliverables

CBOs participating in STELLAR have developed foundational knowledge of EVs and now will need assistance in conducting community outreach. The goal of these outreach events will be to help CBOs better understand their community's current needs, understanding, goals, and concerns surrounding vehicle electrification that will lead the creation of their own strategic plan. Based on community engagement and input, the plans will include a SWOT analysis and identify the infrastructure, mobility, and support needs for their community.

In support of this goal, the outreach firm will:

- Meet bi-weekly with each of the 10 CBO representatives to:
 - Identify community event location, date, and time
 - Co-develop outreach and marketing materials
- Work with each CBO to become acquainted with the community's values, culture, and type of engagement desired
- Develop an outreach event surrounding electric mobility that is unique to the community
 - Produce and distribute outreach and marketing materials (physical and digital) around the event's topic to ensure event attendance. CBO will be responsible for reviewing the materials for community-specific adjustments as needed
 - Develop marketing and outreach strategy for both community members and local fleets to increase awareness of the event
 - Develop strategies for information gathering during the event (i.e., surveys, visual notetaking, etc.) that will help inform the CBO's strategic plan
 - Attend each CBO outreach event and provide staffing for event set-up, execution, and take-down
- Coordinate and meet with CNT and the STELLAR project team bi-weekly to report back progress

Measures of Success:

- Outreach firm successfully works with ten (10) CBOs to plan ten (10) respective outreach events (one outreach event for each CBO's community)
- A total of around 1,000 people are reached through all the outreach events
- CBOs receive relevant input from event participants that informs their strategic plan

Section 3. Project Timeline

Below is the estimated timeline for the project. It is encouraged to have the events take place before July 2025 to allow the CBO time to incorporate the learnings of the event into its strategic plan, but event date is up to the discretion of the CBO.

Task	Timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly check-ins with STELLAR team 	February 2025 - July 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate bi-weekly meetings with CBO representative 	February 2025 - April 2025 (or until event is executed)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop community outreach/marketing strategy) Develop local fleet outreach/marketing strategy Develop event marketing materials for each CBO community Develop information gathering strategies for each CBO community 	March 2025 - May 2025 (or until event is executed)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event attendance to help gather community feedback 	Varies depending on each community event

Section 4. Selection Timeline

Selection Step	Timeline
Accepting RFP Responses	September 11, 2024 – October 11, 2024
Response Evaluation	October 14, 2024 - November 8, 2024
Interview Selection & Interviews (at CNT’s discretion)	November 11, 2024 – December 6, 2024
Notification of Selection	December 16, 2024 – December 20, 2024
Finalize Contract with CNT	January 2, 2025 – January 31, 2025

Section 5. Contract Period and Terms

This agreement's term will be for 6 months. This agreement is expected to commence on February 1, 2025, and end July 31, 2025.

CNT will negotiate contract terms upon selection and will be awarded upon signing of an agreement or contract, which outlines terms, scope, budget, and other necessary items.

A draft contract template is attached as Exhibit A of this RFP; CNT reserves the right to update or alter the contract language when presenting a draft to the selected organization.

Section 6. Proposal Requirements

The firm's proposal shall include the following items outlined below.

I. Project Statement

In three pages, please describe:

1. Firm's understanding of the scope of work to be accomplished
2. Firm's proposal to accomplish and perform the identified services
 - a. Description of Firm's experience and/or strategic process on how they might best work with multiple Chicago-based CBOs to assist with the coordination of an EV-related outreach event that is relevant to the community's needs
 - b. Description of Firm's experience developing outreach and marketing materials, both physical and digital
 - c. Description of Firm's strategy for information gathering of community desires, concerns, understandings, and outlook towards EVs at the community event (i.e., how do you plan to document input and learnings of the event?)
3. Description of the firm's process and staffing capacity to carry out the scope of work
4. Proposed project schedule
5. Proposed project budget (see template in Exhibit B)
 - a. *Please note the following unallowed costs due to federal regulations:*
 - *Alcoholic Beverages*
 - *Travel not specific to the project*
 - *Working lunches*
 - *Airfare upgrades above economy class (unless authorized)*
 - *Unauthorized Rental Car upgrades*
 - *Tips*
 - *Lodging over per diem (unless authorized)*
 - *Car washes*

- *Equipment not specific to the project*
 - *Capabilities excessive to project requirements (i.e., volume production)*
 - *Costs associated with application preparation*
 - *Entertainment*
 - *Late fees*
 - *Unapproved overtime*
 - *Lobbying activities or associated travel costs*
 - *Direct expenses which are included in the Indirect Rate*
 - *Hospitality suites*
 - *Labor for work that is not part of the project*
 - *Unauthorized pre-award costs*
 - *Conference attendance which is not necessary for the project*
 - *Costs submitted with insufficient supporting documentation*
 - *Patent related expenses and fees*
6. Any other relevant information demonstrating the firm’s previous work with local CBOs and/or around topics surrounding transportation, community development, and/or vehicle electrification.

II. Project Team and Firm Information

In three pages, please describe:

1. The proposing team
2. The lead organization and project manager
3. Role of all team members and how this division of labor will enable the applicant team to move this idea from proposal to implementation
4. How the applicant team plans to resolve conflicts or issues within the team and with CBO partners
5. Basic contact information:
 - a. Principal Address of Firm (City, State, Zip Code)
 - b. Firm Phone Number
 - c. Firm Website
 - d. Firm Business Structure (Individual or Sole Proprietorship, Corporation, Partnership, Not for Profit, or please describe if other)
 - e. Firm Annual Revenue
 - f. Total Number of Employees
 - g. Total Number of Current Clients/Customers
 - h. Primary Point of Contact Information (Name, Title, Email)
 - i. Firm Business Type, if any (Small Business / Minority / Women-Owned)

Section 7. Proposal Evaluation and Rating Methodology

Evaluation criteria (listed in the table below) will be scored on a scale from 0 to 5. Note that the following criteria is weighted 20% more:

- How the proposal identifies a strategy to develop an outreach event with 10 unique CBOs that is relevant to each community and meets the goal of reaching 1,000 participants across all events
- Previous work with CBOs
- Project schedule and staffing clarity

Criteria and Scoring Table

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points
How the proposal identifies a strategy to develop an outreach event with 10 unique CBOs that is relevant to each community and meet the goal of reaching 1,000 participants across all events	6
How the proposal identifies a strategy to develop information gathering strategies for the community outreach events to inform CBO strategic plan	5
How the proposal identifies a strategy to conduct outreach to each CBO community and local fleets about the outreach event and electric mobility	5
Background and qualifications in community outreach	5
Demonstrated relevant experience working with CBOs	6
Demonstrated experience working in relevant community-based work	5
Demonstrated clear approach to the scope of work through submitted project schedule and staffing plan	6
Demonstrated knowledge of conflict resolution skills	5
Demonstrated skills in project management and budgeting given staffing resources	5
Demonstrated prior knowledge, skills, and experience working with topics surrounding topics including but not limited to transportation, community development, and/or vehicle electrification	5
Cost effectiveness in relation to the proposed project plan	5

Appendix Exhibit A: Draft Contract Template

The linked [draft contract](#) can be viewed here for reference.

Appendix Exhibit B: Budget Template

The linked [budget template](#) can be downloaded and completed for the final submission.