

NYSERDA 2023 OFFSHORE WIND SOLICITATION ORECRFP23-1

# Disadvantaged Community Impacts

Public Version

Community Offshore Wind LLC

Lease OCS-A 0539



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Narrative

## Section 8.4 – Disadvantaged Community Impacts Narrative Component

## 8.4 Disadvantaged Community Impacts

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NYSERDA 2023 Offshore Wind Solicitation ORECRFP23-1



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## List of acronyms and abbreviations

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>DAC</b>	Disadvantaged Community
<b>NYSERDA</b>	New York State Energy Research Development Agency
<b>EJ</b>	Environmental Justice
<b>CLCPA</b>	The Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act
<b>CJWG</b>	Climate Justice Working Group
<b>SPLASH</b>	Operation Splash
<b>DOL</b>	Department of Labor
<b>DOE</b>	Department of Education
<b>Title One</b>	Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a federal law, provides funding to schools with high numbers or high percentages of students from low-income families.
<b>NSBE</b>	National Society of Black Engineers
<b>SHPE</b>	Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers

## NYSERDA solicitation requirements

Our approach to Disadvantaged Communities impact addresses each requirement laid out by NYSERDA in the Request for Proposal (RFP). The table below identifies each solicitation requirement.

*Table 8.4-1 Solicitation requirements*

Solicitation requirement	Section
Proposals must include specific, quantifiable commitments to providing benefits to Disadvantaged Communities (Disadvantaged Community Commitments). These commitments will be included in Section 6.05 of the Agreement. Proposers should refer to Appendix B.2 for a description of categories of benefits to Disadvantaged Communities.	8.4.3
All Proposers are required to fully detail the benefits and burdens associated with the impacts of the Project's development on any Disadvantaged Communities that are hosting a Project or whose local economy, infrastructure, and air, water, and other natural resources are directly impacted by a Project, as identified through engagement with Disadvantaged Communities, and in accordance with the most recent relevant guidance per the Climate Action Council and Climate Justice Working Group.	8.4.2
Disadvantaged Community Benefits - Proposers must present goals and a strategy for delivering benefits to Disadvantaged Communities. Jobs and local expenditures claimed as benefits must be described in the context of the Project's targets or other considerations respective to prioritizing frontline, low-income, environmental justice, and otherwise historically disadvantaged communities.	8.4.2
Disadvantaged Community Barriers and Burdens - Proposers should present a detailed barriers assessment, including specific burdens of the Project on local communities informed by direct engagement with the impacted communities. For each barrier or burden, the proposer should address strategies to overcoming the barrier or alleviating the burden.	8.4.2
Investing in Long Term Relationships - Proposers should further demonstrate understanding of host or proximate Disadvantaged Communities impacted by the Project through real life encounters and relationship building. Proposers should highlight any community advisory partnerships, summarize the stakeholder engagement conducted, and addressing how the project will prioritize and systematically incorporate feedback from the community.	8.4.2; 8.4.3
Partnerships - Proposers should describe any partnerships entered with host or proximate Disadvantaged Communities impacted by the Project in the capacity of a community advisory group or board that guides feedback and input to the project on a regular basis, ensures community input is being received, and collaborates on any community benefit plan or dissemination of benefits.  Proposers may wish to further provide testimonials from their community partnerships to provide insights into the Proposer's activities in the impacted communities and serve to verify the data and perspectives identified in the barriers assessment	8.4.2.2; 8.4.3.3

### 8.4.1 Summary

As New York transitions to a clean energy economy and looks towards the future of offshore wind, it is essential that the state ensures **frontline, low-income, environmental justice, and otherwise historically disadvantaged communities remain at the forefront of decision making**. Throughout history, Disadvantaged Communities have been overburdened by the siting of power plants and other polluting facilities and have missed out on the economic opportunities that have been created in the process. Even more recently, severe wildfires have caused air quality and pollution particulates (PM2.5) to cause serious concerns in communities like Brooklyn, which have already been hit hard with high rates of youth mortality from asthma<sup>1</sup>. In addition, African American and Latino patients account for more than 80% of hospitalized asthma cases in New York City, making offshore wind and transitioning to renewables more of a priority than ever before. As renewable energy development advances, and the associated economic opportunities increase, it is imperative that these opportunities are not only open to Disadvantaged Communities but are proactively structured in a way that provides these communities a seat at the table and the opportunity for economic success. Community Offshore Wind has already begun to form meaningful relationships with Environmental Justice communities and Disadvantaged Communities in order to incorporate their input into our project design and gain insight into potential impacts. We have already funded pilot programs to support EJ groups, CBOs, and NGOs that benefit individuals in disadvantaged communities, as we know that small changes can make big impacts and early support and engagement can lead to trusted partnerships. In talking to various EJ groups and Community Leaders, we are aware that partnerships are made up of two entities, who agree to cooperate to advance their mutual interests. As a responsible developer of offshore wind, we will ensure that our Project delivers benefits to disadvantaged communities, mitigates historic barriers and burdens, invests in long-term relationships, and creates long-term partnerships with host communities.

[REDACTED]

Even during the early development phase of the Project, Community Offshore Wind has prioritized sourcing from local, small businesses in Disadvantaged Communities. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

These benefits will be delivered through our four-pillared approach of community benefits:

1. **Design and invest to minimize burdens** and impacts - proactively minimizing impacts on our host communities through our onshore construction and operations. While our priority is to avoid impacts on communities, we acknowledge that there will be unavoidable impacts during the development and construction of the Project. We have selected onshore cable routes and landfalls causing the least amount of disruption to Disadvantaged Communities, and where

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/ny\\_asthma/pdf/2018-2019\\_asthma\\_burden\\_nyc.pdf](https://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/ny_asthma/pdf/2018-2019_asthma_burden_nyc.pdf)



disruption is inevitable, we have planned to utilize efficient equipment and coordinate activities with other developers and/or municipalities to have minimal additional impact

2. **Maximize Benefits** [REDACTED]
3. **Targeted community-focused investments** – [REDACTED]
4. **Recognizing the intrinsic benefits** of responsible clean energy development – our Project will help to displace fossil generation resulting in reduced climate emissions and criteria pollutants.

Table 8.4-2 DAC Benefit Summary

[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

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These commitments along with the experience of our joint venture, demonstrate why Community Offshore Wind is best suited to develop a Project that prioritizes the needs of Disadvantaged Communities. Community is not only in our name but engrained in the ethos of our parent companies. National Grid is a New York company that knows how to engage with communities, minimize impacts, and ensure that their concerns are addressed. RWE is the second largest offshore wind developer in the world with a proven record of engaging and partnering with impacted communities, and making sure that stakeholders are not only heard, but also see the results of their inclusion. It is a priority of our joint venture to develop an offshore wind project for the State of New York that delivers on the promises of transparency, inclusion, and equity; to truly live up to the name, Community Offshore Wind.

## 8.4.2 Our philosophy on engagement with disadvantaged communities

The Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) has defined Disadvantaged Communities (DACs) as “communities that bear burdens of negative public health effects, environmental pollution, impacts of climate change, and possess certain socioeconomic criteria, or comprise high concentration of low- and moderate-income (LMI) households<sup>2</sup>. The CLCPA is primarily focused on the intertwined issues of equity and climate change and asserts that the actions taken by the State of New York to mitigate the impact of climate change should prioritize the allocation of public investments to Disadvantaged Communities. As we usher in a new era of clean energy, **Community Offshore Wind is committed to ensuring equitable economic opportunities, as well as minimal additional burden to these disadvantaged communities.** We have utilized the criteria published by the Climate Justice Working Group and the maps published by NYSERDA<sup>3</sup> to identify these communities and target partners who can assist in ensuring a just energy transition. We will engage the NYSERDA Regional Clean Energy Hubs in the Bronx, Brooklyn and on Long Island, to ensure that we assist and provide information to individuals, small businesses, and affordable housing owners about the benefits of the clean energy economy, ways to reduce energy use and costs, and how to make more informed energy decisions.

### 8.4.2.1 Disadvantaged communities affected by our Project

At Community Offshore Wind, we are proactively keeping up with our ambition of maximizing positive impact through early identification of disadvantaged communities potentially impacted by the onshore installation and construction activities of our wind farm and conducting initial engagement to build awareness of our Project, stay close to impacted communities, and retain open channels of communication. This has helped us explore mitigation opportunities and start a dialogue to develop future partnerships. We have conducted an initial set of community engagement efforts, including both one-to-one meetings with local elected officials as well as larger community outreach activities to understand their needs and establish Community Offshore Wind as an approachable, transparent, and responsible developer. Table 8.4-3 below provides an overview of the host disadvantaged communities

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<sup>2</sup> New York State Climate Action Council (2022). Scoping Plan: Executive Summary

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nyserdera.ny.gov/ny/disadvantaged-communities>



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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

As we look towards the continued development of our Project, our goal is to give communities, NYSERDA, and other state agencies a seat at the table. We aim to avoid impacts where possible, and make sure that when impacts occur, the community is left with a net positive position. This is especially important for Disadvantaged Communities, where it is incumbent upon us to facilitate dialogue and participation to the greatest extent possible. We have proactively achieved this by identifying the potential impact of our Project's construction and operation activities on local communities which we mitigate through our design, while also developing a plan to ensure regular and ongoing stakeholder engagement during our operations.

#### 8.4.2.2 Our engagement with Disadvantaged Communities

Since our inception, Community Offshore Wind has been involved in a host of community outreach efforts to directly address the socioeconomic inequities faced by low- and medium-income households, including environmental justice and Disadvantaged Communities. We have funded efforts to directly support and alleviate the everyday struggles of these communities, ranging from donations of fresh seafood and winter coats to conducting informative events for school students to empower the next generation. A selection of community engagement activities conducted to date are listed below:

- **Food security:** In 2022, we donated an equivalent of 30,000 seafood meals, purchased from New York and New Jersey processors to nine food banks that assist disadvantaged communities throughout New York. In 2023, we volunteered and donated turkeys, cranberry sauce, and gravy to the Redemption Church and to Reaching Out Community Services in Brooklyn, New York.
- **Access to resources:** In 2022, we donated 900 winter coats and 100 pairs of gloves to seven NGOs that serve disadvantaged communities throughout the state in partnership with a local MWBE Buy Supply. In 2023, we donated 500 winter coats to five NGOs that serve disadvantaged communities on Long Island and Brooklyn.
- **STEM and Workforce Development:** We invested [REDACTED] into STEM and Environmental Programs for 1,500+ New York Youth, preparing our future workforce for offshore wind jobs.
- **Swim Lessons:** Swimming is a life skill that all children, no matter their socioeconomic status should be proficient in. Teaching today's children how to swim will not only make them safer, it will also prepare them to fill the offshore wind jobs of tomorrow. According to the Department of Health,<sup>4</sup> Black males and females have significantly higher rates of drowning than White or Hispanic males and females. 92 YMCA locations (84%) are located in or near a disadvantaged community. COSW has prioritized safe swimming and with their history of being a pillar in local communities, we have partnered with the YMCA of New York State to provide free swim lessons to K-3 grade children from DAC communities throughout New York State.

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/swimming/docs/drowning\\_statistics.pdf](https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/outdoors/swimming/docs/drowning_statistics.pdf)

**Stakeholder engagement success story: Operation Splash**

In 2023 Community Offshore Wind developed a partnership with Operation Splash, a Freeport based non-profit ran entirely by volunteers, who have dedicated their time to cleaning up local bays, waterways, and shorelines on Long Island.

In addition to sponsoring a boat for a year, an education grant was provided to Operation Splash as education is a key component to the work they do. Both COSW and SPLASH share a goal of prioritizing underserved communities to enhance their relationship with the local environment and provide children with a sense of autonomy despite their circumstances. While many districts are able to attend field trips with SPLASH through other funding streams, Uniondale School District unfortunately does not have the financial capacity to do so.

Community Offshore Wind’s funding made it possible to bring the entire third grade of Uniondale Elementary Schools to Operation Splash during the fall. Students learned about marine and environmental education and also took a boat trip in the bay to learn about the impact pollution has on their waterways. Close to 200 students from 8 schools participated in the program and it was considered a huge success by all parties, including the Uniondale School District.



Pictured left: SPLASH hosts Uniondale at their Freeport facility and pictured right: Community Offshore Wind staff on an Operation Splash boat with students from Uniondale.

*“Giving students a chance to learn about ocean conservation through real-life, hands-on experience is the key to helping them understand the importance of protecting our local bays and environment as a whole.”*

*“They see the issues we face first-hand when we bring them out on the water, and the connections they make become much deeper. Community Offshore Wind and Operation SPLASH share in the goal of providing marine and environmental education to younger generations. Through their generous support, these field trips for Uniondale students are possible.”*

*“These are without a doubt the most wonderful group of students we’ve ever had join us for the Adopt a Storm Drain program! So grateful to share their excitement and positive energy and we’re certain that they’ll be very good stewards of their environment going forward.” – Robert Weltner, Operation Splash*

*“THEY LOVED, LOVED, LOVED, LOVED, LOVED IT!!!!” – Sharifa Jackson, Educator Uniondale Schools*

As our Project matures, we will continue to engage with these communities not only through programming but through a variety of methods, including public open houses, informative forums and workshops, and through our social media channels.



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] In addition, we have also developed a list of accessibility measures (see Residents Section 8.3.4.2 for full list) to increase participation of residents from disadvantaged communities in ongoing stakeholder dialogue, setting them up for success while making decisions directly impacting their future. Some examples include providing incentives for attending meetings (lunch, dinner, uber gift cards) and holding meetings in community centers that already have childcare centers in them so that community members can participate in meetings without distractions and not have the burden of finding childcare in order to participate.

### **8.4.3 Community Offshore Wind commitments to Disadvantaged Communities**

We have developed a customized approach for addressing the challenges faced by disadvantaged communities, both caused directly by our Project, and by historic inequity of economic opportunities, to ensure they are positioned to succeed in the clean energy transition. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] These benefits will be delivered through our four pillars: (1) designing and investing to minimize burdens and impacts, (2) maximizing benefits from Project-specific expenditures and labor, (3) targeted community-focused investments, and (4) recognizing the intrinsic benefits of responsible clean energy development which have been identified to address the concerns we have heard during our engagements and those highlighted in the Climate Justice Working Group report and CLCPA.

Our Disadvantaged Community benefits seamlessly link to the benefit categories identified in Appendix B.2 of the RFP. Project-specific expenditures and jobs are estimated according to the methodology prescribed for Category A benefits, our community-focused investments align with the Category B benefit definition, and other intrinsic benefits are estimated, to the extent practicable, in accordance with Category C benefits methodology.

Community Offshore Wind will leverage the expertise of its parent companies, in delivering community impact. National Grid has a long legacy of positively impacting the lives of New Yorkers while RWE has developed, constructed, and operated several wind farms in collaboration with its host communities. We are committed to coordinating with NYSERDA in delivery and verification of these economic benefits once the Project is awarded and the final criteria for disadvantaged communities are published. We will utilize our defined tracking and monitoring mechanisms for investments, as well as success metrics used to measure stakeholder engagements, to communicate updates and progress of our impact to NYSERDA.

#### **8.4.3.1 Design and invest to minimize burdens and impacts**

At Community Offshore Wind, we are committed to maximizing benefits to the disadvantaged communities affected by our Project activities during development, construction, and operations phases. We have taken proactive steps in our Project design to minimize disruption to host communities, and where disruption is inevitable, we have designed specific investment initiatives to maximize positive impacts.

[REDACTED]

[Redacted text block]

[Redacted text block]

[Large redacted text block]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In addition, we have developed and prioritized an initial list of mitigating measures to ensure minimal disruption from our onshore construction activities:

[REDACTED]

As the Project develops, Community Offshore Wind will continue to engage with local communities,

[REDACTED]

### 8.4.3.2 Maximize benefits from Project-specific expenditures and labor

Community Offshore Wind is committed to keeping Disadvantaged Communities at the forefront of the clean energy transition and is proactively delivering on this ambition by creating equitable economic opportunities for these communities. [REDACTED]

To deliver on our ambition to prioritize equitable economic opportunities, [REDACTED]

#### Stakeholder engagement success story: Purchase of equipment and services from MWBE in a DAC

Community Offshore Wind prioritizes buying goods and services from MWBE businesses and small businesses located in disadvantaged communities.

We procured services from Certified New York State WBE *Factory Systems Installer* located within the Sunset Park Disadvantaged Community census tracks to fully upfit the interior of our electric community van.

### 8.4.3.3 Targeted community-focused investments

Community Offshore Wind is dedicated to delivering direct benefits to DACs through targeted community-focused investments. [REDACTED]

#### 8.4.3.3.1 Community Benefits Fund

Community Offshore Wind has developed a Community Benefits Fund (detailed in Section 8.3.4.2), [REDACTED]



			[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Disadvantaged Communities are primarily hindered by four key barriers in accessing clean energy services prescribed by the CLCPA. These include limited access to physical and socio-economic structures, lack of financial and knowledge-related resources and capacity, lack of awareness, and complex programmatic design further limiting their participation and success.

Community Offshore Wind aims to address such barriers by providing economic opportunities to these communities. We will fund workforce development programs to enable individuals to meaningfully benefit from employment opportunities created while removing potential barriers and go beyond to invest in building the workforce of the future by funding of youth employment programs.

The offshore wind industry presents a unique opportunity to shape the creation of a new and growing industry in New York State, with a 3.5% growth rate in clean energy jobs in between 2021 and 2022. To enable disadvantaged communities to benefit from this clean energy transition, Community Offshore Wind has designed a framework of programs for workforce trainings and increased access to pre-/apprenticeships, [REDACTED]

Our framework of programs has been developed in collaboration with our training partners and is meticulously designed to address the most critical occupational gaps and needs of tomorrow's offshore wind workforce. [REDACTED]

The following is an overview of the programs meant to enable current workforce, including disadvantaged communities.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/about/redhookstreetcar.shtml#finalreport>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.uprose.org/transportation-justice>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.unitedforalice.org/Attachments/AllReports/23UFA\\_Report\\_New\\_York\\_4.11.23\\_Final.pdf](https://www.unitedforalice.org/Attachments/AllReports/23UFA_Report_New_York_4.11.23_Final.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/world-most-expensive-cities-economist-2022/index.html>









[REDACTED]

#### 8.4.3.4 Recognizing the intrinsic benefits of responsible clean energy development

In addition, Community Offshore Wind is directly contributing [REDACTED] [REDACTED] thereby directly contributing to mitigating the inequitable effects of climate change faced by our disadvantaged communities.

### 8.4 Our legacy and expertise

#### National Grid

National Grid has a long track record of supporting communities in New York State. National Grid supports programs designed to help improve the way people live, work, and play, with social responsibility at the core of its DNA. In 2021, National Grid donated \$6M throughout NYS communities via its Corporate Citizenship, Jurisdiction, and Customer and Community program; and an additional \$1.4M in NYS communities through the National Grid Foundation.

Most recently in October 2022, National Grid launched “Winter Customer Savings Initiative” to help customers reduce their energy use and save money, manage bills, and secure available energy assistance. One of the bill management programs offered by National Grid includes the Budget Plan, which is designed to reduce uncertainty and volatility in monthly energy bills by having a fixed monthly payment schedule based on annual consumption. This helps in offsetting high seasonal bills and makes it easier to anticipate monthly energy costs while planning household budgets. As part of this effort, National Grid allocated \$10M in payment-assistance funding opportunities to New York State customers (out of a total funding of \$17M) through federal agencies and regional non-profits. In addition, National Grid has designed special initiatives for low-income families and customers needing special assistance to meet their energy needs<sup>11</sup>. Other programs include but are not limited to:

- The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP), or the Fuel Assistance Program, helps income-eligible households to pay their heating bills via federally funded grants
- Discount Rates provides qualifying income-eligible customers to receive a discounted rate on electric and gas service, as well as no-cost energy efficiency upgrades.

National Grid’s track record of strong relationships, and partnerships in these communities proves that our commitment to Disadvantaged Communities goes much further than what is proposed here. Numerous National Grid employees sit on various non-profit boards throughout the State, volunteering

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<sup>11</sup> Details at [ngrid.com/heretohelp](https://ngrid.com/heretohelp)

their time and talent to ensure that the missions of statewide NGOs are brought to life. We at Community Offshore Wind intend to do the same and carry on that legacy.

## RWE

RWE has been developing and operating windfarms for 20 years and is responsible for providing clean and green energy to households across Europe and US. One of the core tenets of RWE is making sustainable impact on the local communities in which it operates, which is evident across all projects, as indicated in selected example initiatives below from some offshore wind projects:

- Development of a local community fund worth \$22 million in Gwynt y Mor (Wales) to make sustainable impact on the development of Northern Wales throughout the lifetimes of its project. The fund will be administered by a local NGO in collaboration with local officials, and aims to reduce inequality in local community, develop strong growth, and build sustainable communities
- Funding of decarbonization projects in local communities to promote energy efficiency and facilitate clean energy transition in an equitable manner, e.g. Brechfa Forest Wind Farm Community Fund is funding community buildings to make infrastructural improvements to reduce carbon footprint and electricity costs, providing sustainable transportation, and other local benefits.

With nearly 200 projects in 19 states, RWE has also made significant investment in rural communities around the US, where they have provided local jobs and increased tax revenue with every clean energy project. RWE recently assisted more than 45 local organizations, such as first responders, regional and local food banks and food pantries, social services for senior citizens and local schools with student food programs in those communities in which we live and operate.