

This document is an introduction to NYSERDA's Energy Equity Collaborative (the Collaborative) and its Founding Steering Committee.

The goal of the Collaborative is to allow for deeper collaboration between historically marginalized communities and NYSERDA's program planning.

This document is meant to provide guidance on how NYSERDA plans to structure the Energy Equity Collaborative. It defines the proposed purpose of the Collaborative and the benefits of participating in the Founding Steering Committee. It also outlines the role and responsibilities of the Founding Steering Committee, as well as the Collaborative's proposed structure, sample engagement activities, membership information, and compensation for its first-year members. The selected Founding Steering Committee members will finalize the scope, structure, roles of the Collaborative in its first year.

## Energy Equity Collaborative

### Purpose

NYSERDA's Energy Equity Collaborative will have several overarching purposes. Those purposes include:

- Enabling deeper collaboration with historically marginalized communities around NYSERDA program planning;
- Creating a shared space for collaboration between those that serve and represent historically marginalized communities, NYSERDA and other State agencies and Authorities;
- Ensuring that the experiences, concerns, and needs of those on the frontlines of the climate crisis are identified and included in the early-stage development and ground-level implementation of NYSERDA's climate and energy programs; and
- Organizing engagement with working groups around priority topics that will include but not be limited to environmental justice, workforce development, energy affordability, and clean energy deployment.

NYSERDA is taking an active role in expanding the energy and climate equity conversation. The Collaborative will be the one of the leadership arms of this effort.

### Benefits of participating in the Collaborative

Organizations that represent historically marginalized communities and participate in the Collaborative can:

- Directly inform and influence clean energy programs and policy—especially during the critical early stages of program development—to ensure community needs are met and communities receive a fair and equitable share of the benefits from clean energy investments;
- Participate in an easy-to-use central platform that connects multiple program teams and executives at NYSERDA and the interagency Low-Income Energy Task Force (LIETF);
- Help ensure transparency and accountability of NYSERDA and other LIETF member agencies through public meetings by documenting how program feedback gets implemented.

The Collaborative convenes in public through regular meetings, informational webinars, and an annual conference.

# Energy Equity Collaborative – Founding Steering Committee

The Collaborative’s first step is to develop a Founding Steering Committee, which will guide and define the Collaborative during its first year. The Founding Steering Committee will set the Collaborative’s goals, responsibilities, and mission. Founding Steering Committee members will serve for one year.

In the Collaborative’s second year, the Founding Steering Committee will give way to a general Steering Committee.

Both the Collaborative and the Founding Steering Committee will have a unique role, set of responsibilities, communication methodology, membership, and compensation. The Founding Steering Committee’s roles and responsibilities are defined in detail below.

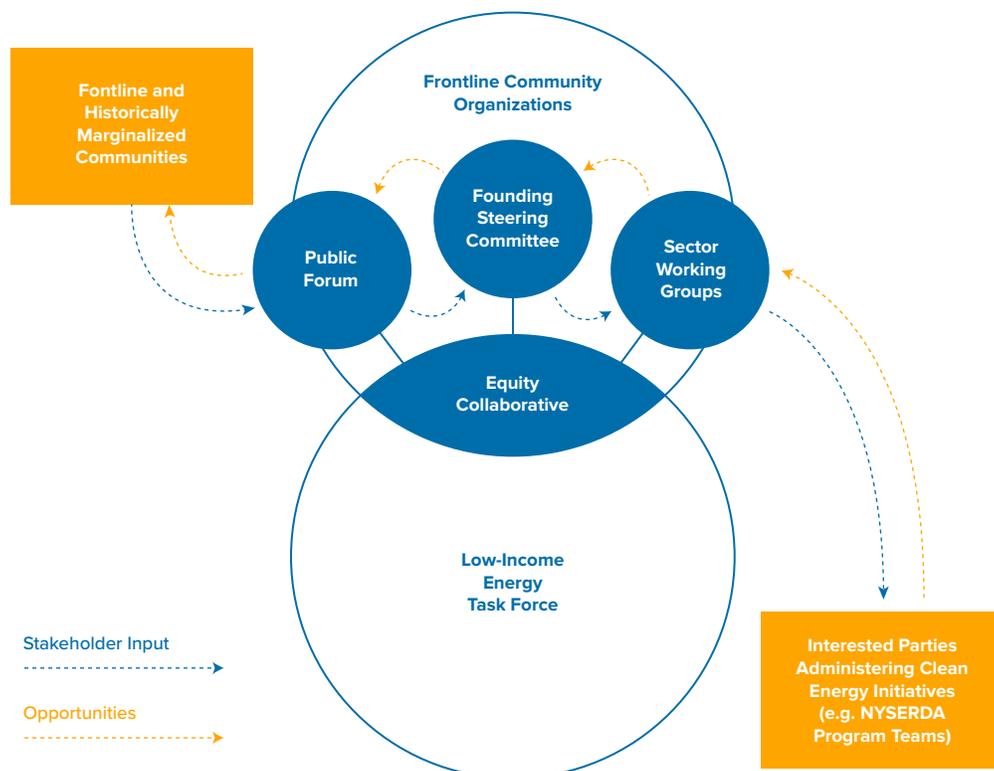
## Role

As the leadership body of the Collaborative, the Founding Steering Committee will provide guidance, feedback, and recommendations on how to advance an inclusive clean energy economy in New York State.

## Responsibilities

- Engage – with NYSERDA’s support – a larger set of groups that have a stake in creating an inclusive clean energy economy;
- Define the Collaborative’s goals, responsibilities, and mission;
- Develop the Collaborative’s charter, which will include its structure, guidelines, and focus areas as well as norms for communication, leadership, meetings, and compensation;
- Work to ensure that a general Steering Committee is defined and formed by the end of the Collaborative’s first year, which may involve consulting with the larger Energy Equity Collaborative’s membership body;
- Define the selection process and criteria used to elect general Steering Committee members in the future;
- Interface directly with NYSERDA leadership and staff on emerging energy issues;
- Coordinate as needed with other participating interagency partners;
- Co-manage the Collaborative’s working groups;
- Co-lead the announcement and the establishment of the Collaborative in the first year;
- Ensure that frontline communities statewide are participating in the broader Collaborative body.

Note that the initial roles and responsibilities of the Collaborative have already begun to be developed with input from more than 20 community-based organizations over a series of three meetings that took place between Fall 2021 and Winter 2022. This diagram illustrates the proposed process for how organizations part of the Collaborative will work together:



## Membership

The Founding Steering Committee will be comprised of frontline community groups and other stakeholders that serve and represent historically marginalized communities. Together, members will work on a wide array of energy and climate equity issues across New York State. Members will serve for one year during this initial phase of the Collaborative.

While it may be challenging to fully represent all communities across the State, the goal is to ensure that membership in the Founding Steering Committee is generally reflective of diverse communities that face unique barriers and opportunities at the intersection of energy and environmental justice, workforce development, housing affordability, resilience, and renewable energy.

## Selection Criteria

Members of the Founding Steering Committee will be selected by a group of reviewers composed of unconflicted individuals from non-governmental and community-based organizations, along with governmental (including NYSERDA) staff reviewers. Those eligible to apply to serve on the Founding Steering Committee:

- Are community-based organizations that principally serve (greater than 50% of their work is in service of) and/or are based in a New York State (NYS) Disadvantaged Community, as defined here;<sup>1</sup>
- Have expertise in clean energy equity and/or climate justice issues;
- Demonstrate a primary mission of advocating on behalf of or serving disadvantaged communities.

A community-based organization refers to a private non-profit (incorporated or unincorporated) or for-profit organization with a mission focused on making desired improvements to a community's social health, well-being, and overall functioning. The organization should also be representative of a community or significant segments of a community and provide services to individuals in the community, based on input from community members.

This selection criteria (see Table below) were developed based on three meetings with over 20 community-based organizations held between November 2021 and March 2022 and further refined from feedback in a follow up survey.

NYSERDA will strive to make the selection process as inclusive as possible by broadening the membership and reach beyond the traditional stakeholders that typically engage with NYSERDA and allowing any organization to self-nominate itself to be considered for the Founding Steering Committee.

Preference will be given to organizations that meet as many of the selection criteria as possible, while balancing the need for representation across each of the criteria. If multiple organizations from the same coalition apply, NYSERDA may ask the coalition to select one representative to serve on the Founding Steering Committee. The Importance Weight column below shows the criteria that will be prioritized when selecting Founding Steering Committee members.

Founding Steering Committee Selection Criteria	Corresponding Question	Corresponding Answer	Importance Weight (1-5 with 5 being most important & 1 least important)
<b>Serve and Represent DACs</b>	Explain how your organization principally serves and/or represents and works directly with residents located in disadvantaged communities (DACs), hard to reach, underserved rural communities, and/or other areas of the State with high levels of poverty and limited access to resources.	Explain how the organization serves and works directly with residents and organizations located in disadvantaged communities (DACs). Provide supporting information such as a list of neighborhoods, zip codes served, including housing and demographic characteristics of households in the community served; and/or provide supporting documentation such as an annual or grant report, or a service territory map, or a summary of projects noting percentage (by budget or staffing) dedicated to DACs.	5

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of the Collaborative Founding Steering Committee application, the term disadvantaged communities is inclusive of hard to reach, underserved rural communities, Indigenous Nations, and other areas of the State with high levels of poverty and limited access to resources as well as the NYS interim DAC definition as defined here: <https://www.nyserdera.ny.gov/ny/disadvantaged-communities>.

Founding Steering Committee Selection Criteria	Corresponding Question	Corresponding Answer	Importance Weight (1-5 with 5 being most important & 1 least important)
<b>Demonstrated Impact on Communities Served</b>	Provide evidence for how your organization develops successful solutions for community priorities and the impact your organization has achieved in creating solutions within communities.	<p>Briefly describe efforts the organization has made to involve diverse and underserved populations directly affected by energy and environmental justice issues in leadership roles and in setting priorities for your organization's work.</p> <p>Briefly describe initiatives your organization has implemented to serve or benefit these underserved populations and outcomes resulting from these initiatives.</p> <p>Briefly describe how your organization has worked with these community members to develop solutions to address energy and environmental justice issues that impact the communities your organization serves.</p> <p>Provide supporting examples of discrete activities with measurable/ documented outcomes such as a detailed summary of successful campaign victories, evidence of concrete success with community-centered efforts, and/or samples of media coverage demonstrating the organization's involvement in successful community-centered efforts.</p>	4
<b>Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) Led Organization</b>	Is your organization a BIPOC-led organization?	Indicate any BIPOC leadership in your organization (Board Members, Executive Director, Management Staff, etc.)	3
<b>Geographic Representation</b> A diverse set of groups from urban and rural areas representing the regions of New York State upstate and downstate regions of New York and other key geographic areas.	What New York region(s) does your organization serve?	What New York regions does your organization serve? Indicate all that apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital Region</li> <li>• Central New York</li> <li>• Finger Lakes</li> <li>• Long Island</li> <li>• Mid-Hudson</li> <li>• Mohawk Valley</li> <li>• New York City</li> <li>• North Country</li> <li>• Southern Tier</li> <li>• Western New York</li> <li>• Tribal Reservation</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	3

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Founding Steering Committee Selection Criteria	Corresponding Question	Corresponding Answer	Importance Weight (1-5 with 5 being most important & 1 least important)
<p><b>Experience and Expertise</b></p> <p>Stakeholders represent the diversity of lived experiences and expertise of New York’s historically marginalized communities.</p>	<p>Does your organization demonstrate subject matter expertise, including lived experiences of community members of historically marginalized communities, in one or more of the following program areas?</p> <p>Program areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean transportation</li> <li>• Community outreach and engagement</li> <li>• Community-led solar</li> <li>• Energy resilience</li> <li>• Energy efficient, electrified, and healthy low-to-moderate income housing</li> <li>• Environmental / Climate Justice</li> <li>• Energy affordability and efficiency</li> <li>• Microgrid development (including resiliency)</li> <li>• Large-scale renewables, including land-based and offshore</li> <li>• Workforce development</li> <li>• Other areas related to NYSERDA’s work impacting disadvantaged communities</li> </ul>	<p>Demonstrate the proposing organization’s subject matter expertise in one or more of the referenced program areas. Provide supporting examples such as summary of applicable staff profiles or applicable staff resumes. Describe the racial/ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic background of key staff members and their expertise/experience, including lived experience, in addressing energy issues or concerns of disadvantaged community members</p>	<p>1</p>

### Engagement activities

The Founding Steering Committee and Collaborative members will participate in a range of activities designed to increase engagement. Examples include:

- **Develop the Energy Equity Collaborative charter.**

Develop the Collaborative charter, including the vision, strategies, structure, and norms for communication, leadership, meetings, and compensation.
- **Identify ways to work with NYSERDA.**

Identify priority policy and program areas the Collaborative should work on as a collective with NYSERDA, which will coordinate with interagency LIETF representatives as needed and helpful.
- **Create sector-specific working groups.**

Identify policy and program barriers and solutions through sector-specific working groups.
- **Partner with NYSERDA in program design.**

Learn about and identify opportunities to participate in program design efforts in partnership with NYSERDA staff. There are several upcoming initiatives such as the NY-Sun Community Solar codesign which is working with community stakeholders to co-create a community-led, community-owned solar program. There is a similar opportunity around beneficial electrification of low-to-moderate income housing, building codes, and other programs.
- **Share best practices and lessons learned.**

Serve as a forum for organizations to share best practices and lessons learned delivering clean energy and climate justice solutions to community residents. Information will be shared through a regular newsletter, public meetings, and an annual conference.

### Compensation

NYSERDA offers a Disadvantaged Community (DAC) Honorarium. The DAC Honorarium, which is available on an opt-in basis, is aimed at expanding participation capacity. It will compensate under-resourced community-based organizations for serving on the Founding Steering Committee and helping complete its first-year responsibilities as well as for participation in other applicable Collaborative activities.

After the first year, the Founding Steering Committee will determine criteria and guidelines for compensating organizations that participate on the general Steering Committee and/or other applicable Collaborative activities.

Organizations are eligible to serve on the Founding Steering Committee and receive compensation through the DAC Honorarium if the organization can certify they are a non-profit (incorporated or unincorporated) or for-profit organization, registered to do business in New York State, aimed at making desired improvements to a community’s social health, wellbeing, and overall functioning, as well as meet at least one of the two following additional criteria:

1. They represent a community-based organization that principally serves (greater than 50% of their work is in service of) and/or is based in a NYS Disadvantaged Community.<sup>2</sup> The organization is representative of a community or significant segments of a community; and provides services to individuals in the community based on input from community members. The organization must also understand what strategies and solutions would be most likely to help overcome barriers to disadvantaged communities accessing clean energy; knowledge of barriers related to low-income, Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), affordable housing, environmental justice, underserved rural communities, and other areas with high levels of poverty and limited access to resources;

OR

2. The organization is based in NYS and has expertise in clean energy equity and/or climate justice issues which may include but is not limited to experience in providing services to and implementing clean energy projects in disadvantaged communities, including: lived experience which may be in energy issues, engaging with and providing housing and advocacy services, transportation, workforce, MWBE, and other related services to disadvantaged communities.

General Energy Equity Collaborative members may also receive compensation in the first year of Collaborative activities if they meet the following two criteria:

1. The activity they participate in is related to NYSERDA policy and program planning (e.g., participation in working groups and other Collaborative meetings would generally qualify).
2. They are eligible for compensation through the DAC Honorarium.

## Implementation Timeline

The proposed timeline is subject to change based on Founding Steering Committee decision-making.



## Program Overview

For a more complete view of each role, responsibility, time commitment, and compensation eligibility, review this table.

Role	Responsibilities	Estimated Time Commitment	Eligibility for NYSERDA Compensation
<b>Founding Steering Committee Community Co-Chair</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversee development of EC Charter in collaboration with Founding Steering Committee members and with support from NYSERDA</li> <li>• Work with NYSERDA to understand state policy and procurement parameters and guide engagement of SC on related topics</li> <li>• Oversee Founding Steering Committee and ensure all working groups make progress on workstreams</li> <li>• Ensure EC members are engaged and actively participating</li> <li>• Serve as primary point of contact for EC</li> <li>• Gather input from Founding Steering Committee and working group members</li> <li>• Serve as Co-chair at Founding Steering Committee meetings (co-develop agendas, co-facilitate meetings, etc.)</li> </ul>	1-year term ~2-4 Hours / Week  Biweekly meetings with NYSERDA Co-Chair	Yes (if eligible through DAC Honorarium)

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<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of the DAC Honorarium, the term disadvantaged communities is inclusive of hard to reach, underserved rural communities, Indigenous Nations, and other areas of the State with high levels of poverty and limited access to resources as well as the NYS interim DAC definition as defined here: <https://www.nyserdera.ny.gov/ny/disadvantaged-communities>.

Role	Responsibilities	Estimated Time Commitment	Eligibility for NYSERDA Compensation
<b>NYSERDA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serve as Co-chair of Founding Steering Committee and associated meetings (co-develop agendas, co-facilitate meetings, etc.)</li> <li>• Oversee day to day operations of EC (including public communications such as website and email digest)</li> <li>• Support Founding Steering Committee and ensure all working groups make progress on workstreams</li> <li>• Engage and coordinate with NYSERDA leadership, interagency partners, and EC members; report out on decision-making and how feedback has been incorporated</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate NYSERDA teams receive recommendations / feedback</li> <li>• Manage and staff working groups</li> </ul>	<p>Biweekly meetings with Community Stakeholder Co-Chair</p> <p>Daily/weekly activities as needed</p>	N/A
<b>Founding Steering Committee Members (Approximately 12 members)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-develop EC Charter including scope and governance structure of EC, with Steering Committee Co-Chairs</li> <li>• Establish priorities of the EC in collaboration with Steering Committee Community Co-Chair and NYSERDA Co-Chair and ex-officio LIETF members including input on Founding Steering Committee meeting agendas and identify working groups areas</li> <li>• (Co-)lead a designated working group including co-developing working group priorities and meeting agendas and movement of recommendations, reports and other feedback from working group to co-chairs and appropriate NYSERDA and / or other Agency program teams</li> <li>• Serve as primary point of contact for working group members and Collaborative members as a whole on identified issues and opportunities for Collaborative and NYSERDA attention</li> <li>• Conduct community stakeholder outreach to broaden membership of EC (including recruiting organizations to join working groups and join larger EC membership)</li> <li>• Provide input on emerging stakeholder engagement opportunities around NYSERDA programs</li> </ul>	<p>1-year term ~8 Hours / Month</p> <p>Monthly or Quarterly Steering Committee meetings</p> <p>Monthly working group meetings</p>	Yes (if eligible through DAC Honorarium)
<b>Equity Collaborative General Member</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in working groups and general meetings</li> <li>• Attend informational webinars</li> <li>• Provide input and feedback into program implementation</li> <li>• Identify opportunities for program co-design</li> <li>• Conduct community stakeholder outreach to broaden membership of EC (including recruit organizations to join working groups and join larger EC membership)</li> </ul>	<p>2-4 Hours / Month</p> <p>Monthly working group meetings</p> <p>Quarterly informational webinars</p> <p>Annual conference</p>	Yes, depending on if activity involves NYSERDA seeking input on policy and program planning and if organization is eligible for compensation through DAC Honorarium

