

# Job Posting

## Microgrid Projects Manager



**The Reclaim Our Power: Utility Justice Campaign** was forged by the California fires of 2018 and is campaigning for a new energy system that meets people’s needs amid a collapsing PG&E utility. We envision frontline communities and workers owning and running a sustainable, affordable, decentralized, and resilient energy system. PG&E’s failing equipment has not only set our state on fire; their dysfunction is increasingly shutting off power and disrupting our ability to live, especially life-giving machines of medically vulnerable people.

We have to reclaim our power, and one way to keep the electricity on is to build clean microgrids—a system of solar panels, batteries and control devices that can operate independently of the grid when the grid is shut down. While some microgrids exist now, we commit to prioritizing Black, Indigenous and frontline communities to gain this technology to keep the power on at critical community facilities and to advocate for policies that will get us there.

The Campaign seeks a motivated, experienced, and skilled Microgrid Projects Manager who is passionate about economic, environmental, and social justice, to manage the Campaign’s Microgrid Projects initiative (see the attached description). The Projects Manager will guide and coordinate the Campaign’s Microgrid Projects initiative in close collaboration with the staff and the Campaign’s Microgrid Cohort. The position is full-time and pays a salary of \$60,000 to \$90,000, depending on experience, plus benefits. It is based in Oakland and supervised by the Campaign Coordinator, with the support of the LCEA Coordinator.

### Role of the Microgrid Projects Manager

The goal of the Microgrid Projects initiative is to support the building of resilience hubs in frontline communities. The initiative is structured around a cohort of organizations serving as community-based microgrid developers. The Projects Manager has a key role in coordinating the Cohort’s efforts to build these microgrid projects—convening regular meetings, supporting the project planning and development, identifying technical needs and resources, and facilitating collaboration among partners.

### Primary Job Responsibilities:

- Convene and coordinate the Microgrid Cohort: set agendas and timelines, facilitate meetings, foster collaboration among members
- Manage the Cohort’s microgrid project process through various development stages: facilitate site identification and selection, including collaboration between Cohort members and site owners; provide support for pre-development microgrid design; support Cohort in securing funding and project financing; support finding and contracting with a microgrid developer to construct the project.
- Support the Cohort in addressing challenges in their project development as they arise
- Report regularly on Cohort progress and issues and work with Campaign staff and leadership in furtherance of the overall Campaign

**Qualifications:**

- A passion for social justice, climate justice and the utility justice mission of the Reclaim Our Power Campaign
- Demonstrated experience in managing solar, solar plus storage, and/or microgrid installation projects through the different development stages: site qualification, design, funding and project financing, engineering and construction
- Demonstrated experience in coordinating community groups to achieve a common goal, especially in diverse, low-income, or frontline communities
- Good written and verbal communication skills.
- Experience in a collective work environment
- Available 40 hours/week for a minimum of 6 months; preferred start by May 23, 2022

**How to Apply:**

Please send a cover letter explaining your interest in the position and your availability, along with a resume, to [hire@localcleanenergy.org](mailto:hire@localcleanenergy.org) by April 29, 2022 with subject line "Applying for ROP Microgrid Projects Manager." People of color, women, LGBTQ are strongly encouraged to apply. No phone calls please. Thanks for your interest!

Description of the Microgrid Projects Initiative on next page.

# Microgrid Projects Initiative: Phase 2 Cohort



This document describes Phase 2 of the Microgrid Projects initiative of the Reclaim Our Power (ROP) Campaign.

## Description of the Initiative

The goal of ROP's Microgrid Projects initiative is to support the building of resilience hubs in California frontline communities and to advocate for policies that will get us there. This effort is part of the Campaign's community-driven energy resilience efforts to support community-based organizations in developing microgrid-based resilience hubs in their communities.

Resilience hubs are facilities that provide vital services to their communities, and which can be islanded from the electrical grid and remain functioning when the grid is shut off. Such resilience hubs are now a vital form of energy resilience for low-income and at-risk communities as climate-caused and utility-planned grid power shutoffs become the norm.

These microgrid-based projects are meant to demonstrate the viability and value of resilience hubs to the community and to strengthen the capacity of community-based organizations to be microgrid project developers.

Phase 1 of this ROP initiative consisted of a series of education sessions in the summer of 2021 on the importance of community driven microgrid resilience and the process by which community organizations can build resilience hubs in their communities. Phase 2 is the project planning and development phase coordinating 5-10 organizations who have the interest and capacity to build resilience hubs—to demonstrate their viability and value to the community.

Accordingly, Phase 2 is structured around a cohort of organizations serving as community-based microgrid developers (the Cohort)—developers of resilience hub projects in their respective communities. The member organizations of the cohort have each committed to building a resilience hub project.

The Cohort will function as a support network for the Phase 2 Cohort members: sharing information, identifying challenges, and providing mutual support. ROP is the convener of the cohort and serves as the main provider of guidance, assistance, and resources needed to address microgrid project challenges and advance these projects to completion.

## Review of Microgrid Project Development Stages

The development of microgrid projects is not unlike the development of shared solar projects by community-based project developers in states that have community solar laws. As the Phase 1 Cohort learned, project development involves a number of stages each with its own challenges. These project development stages, some of which can run in parallel, are outlined very briefly below, each requiring various levels of support: staff funding, community organizing, partner relationship development, technical assistance, project construction financing, and project construction.

**1. Project Developer Readiness:** Community education and organizing to inform community-based organizations about microgrid resilience hubs, the needs they can address, and their potential benefits to the community. The outcome is for the Cohort members to be committed to building a demonstration resilience hub in their respective communities and secure the resources (funding) to do so—to become community-based project developers. It also involves reaching clarity on the desired ownership and governance model of that resilience hub.

**2. Project Site Qualification:** Investigation of potential demonstration project locations, such as critical facilities that provide services to the community and can function as resilience hubs when power is shut off. This involves a willingness of facility owners to partner with community-based project developer organizations to install microgrid technology on site and to agree on who will own and manage the microgrid.

**3. Pre-Development Microgrid Design:** Preliminary design and feasibility of a microgrid at the project site to provide the desired services, both under normal operation and during power shutoffs. This involves engagement of the community to define the desired level and kind of services, reaching agreement with the facility owner, and securing technical assistance to design/engineer a microgrid to meet community specifications—critical load requirements at a viable cost.

**4. Project Financing:** Financing the construction of such microgrid projects is typically one of the greatest hurdles. The absence of a microgrid tariff that is commercially attractive also impedes financing the project. As a result, the normal financial markets rarely find community-based microgrids to be financially viable. Hence alternative or new financing mechanisms or strategies are generally needed for demonstration projects to be built.

**5. Engineering-Procurement-Construction (EPC) Partnership:** Engaging in a request for proposal (RFP) process to find, evaluate, negotiate, and contract with a “construction” company that will work with community developers to build out the microgrid project, based on construction financing, to meet mutually agreed upon labor and performance standards at specified construction costs.

**6. Grid Interconnection:** Connecting the microgrid project to the distribution grid is the final stage in bringing a project online. It can be a challenge in its own right, and it might involve issues that need to be considered in the design stage of the project. This is especially true in the case of multi-customer microgrids, in which the utility is often a major player regarding both the design and financial viability of the microgrid project.

#### **Cohort Operational Model:**

The cohort operational model assumes the member organizations of the Cohort have each committed to being a community-based microgrid developer and to finding resources—with at least a half time dedicated staffer or equivalent—to be able to play that role. A typical microgrid development project would likely require a two-year commitment. Each Cohort member is responsible for managing their own project but will likely be dependent on ROP assistance and resources to successfully accomplish the development stages described above:

1. Project Developer Readiness
2. Project Site Qualification
3. Pre-Development Microgrid Design
4. Project Financing
5. Engineering-Procurement-Construction (EPC) Partnership
6. Grid Interconnection

ROP has a key role in the success of the Cohort. It recruits Cohort members, convenes regular meetings, and encourages collaboration among its members. Most importantly, it finds the resources and the assistance collectively needed by the Cohort for each stage of the project development process. ROP will help guide projects through stages #1 and #2 and will serve as the interface between the cohort and needed external resources for stages #3, #4, and #5.

For example, ROP will attempt to secure technical assistance from DOE, the Clean Energy Group, People's Solar Energy Fund, and other resources. It will provide standard contracts and legal support to the cohort wherever possible. In short, it will attempt to provide common approaches and solutions to be tailored to all the Cohort members. To be manageable, the Cohort will need to be limited to a small number of members.

An ROP full time staff person—a Microgrid Projects Manager—will be dedicated to managing all the moving parts of the Cohort and its projects, as described above. This will require a person with strong management skills, demonstrated solar or microgrid project development experience, and experience working with diverse communities.