

City of Fayetteville Staff Review Form

2019-0129

Legistar File ID

3/5/2019

City Council Meeting Date - Agenda Item Only
N/A for Non-Agenda Item

Leif Olson

2/14/2019

SUSTAINABILITY/RESILIENCE (631)

Submitted By

Submitted Date

Division / Department

Action Recommendation:

Staff requests the City Council support Fayetteville's participation in the SolSmart solar-friendly community program to identify ways to reduce solar installation costs and streamline the City's solar installation permitting process.

Budget Impact:

Account Number

Fund

Project Number

Project Title

Budgeted Item? NA

Current Budget \$ -

Funds Obligated \$ -

Current Balance \$ -

Does item have a cost? NA

Item Cost

Budget Adjustment Attached? NA

Budget Adjustment

Remaining Budget \$ -

V20180321

Purchase Order Number: _____

Previous Ordinance or Resolution # _____

Change Order Number: _____

Approval Date: _____

Original Contract Number: _____

Comments:



MEETING OF MARCH 5, 2019

TO: Mayor and City Council

THRU: Don Marr, Chief of Staff
Peter Nierengarten, Director of Sustainability
Garner Stoll, Development Services Director

FROM: Leif Olson

DATE: February 11, 2019

SUBJECT: SolSmart Solar-Friendly Community Designation

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff requests the City Council support Fayetteville's participation in the SolSmart solar-friendly community program to identify ways to reduce solar installation costs and streamline the City's solar installation permitting process.

BACKGROUND:

SolSmart is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Energy Technologies Office and led by the Solar Foundation and the International City/County Management Association. SolSmart is a national designation program designed to recognize communities that have taken key steps to address local barriers to solar energy and foster the growth of mature local solar markets. SolSmart recognizes cities, counties, and small towns for making it faster, easier, and more affordable to go solar. In recognition, communities receive designations of SolSmart Gold, Silver and Bronze. SolSmart has a goal of designating 300 U.S. communities by October of 2020.

The City Council adopted the Fayetteville Energy Action Plan with Resolution #25-18 on January 2, 2018. The Energy Action Plan has a building energy reduction goal of 3% annually. This transfers incrementally to an energy supply goal of achieving 50% community-wide clean energy by 2030, and 100% community-wide clean energy by 2050. City staff recognizes the SolSmart program as an asset for identifying and removing planning and/or permitting barriers for property owners and businesses from installing solar energy systems.

DISCUSSION:

To achieve certification the City must meet requirements across eight categories of the SolSmart criteria. To be considered for all levels of designation, communities must meet the overall program prerequisites and points requirements in the two foundation categories: 1) Permitting and 2) Planning, Zoning and Development Regulations. These prerequisites require communities to create and post a permit checklist online and construct a review and develop a mem on existing barriers to solar in the zoning code. Communities then earn points by taking

actions across special focus categories of their choice, which also encourage solar cost reductions. These categories include: inspection, construction codes, solar rights, utility engagement, community engagement, and market development and finance.

To help communities achieve designation, SolSmart now provides a no-cost technical assistant that will work with City staff to evaluate programs and practices that impact solar markets and identify high-prospect opportunities. Once designated, Fayetteville will be the first SolSmart community in the State of Arkansas.

BUDGET/STAFF IMPACT:

Staff anticipates that working through the SolSmart designation will take several months. The process will likely also include recommended amendments to the Unified Development Code that will be brought back before the City Council for adoption.

Attachments:

Fayetteville Energy Action Plan supporting documentation

How to become a solar-friendly community through SolSmart presentation.

SolSmart scorecard

ENERGY ACTION PLAN



FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS

INTRODUCTION: THE SCOPE OF THE ENERGY ACTION PLAN

The Energy Action Plan will address Fayetteville's current conditions in the areas below, set goals for improvement, and provide detailed implementation steps to achieve a more energy and resource efficient future. Details of these actions are available in chapter 3.

IN SCOPE:



TRANSPORTATION



ENERGY SUPPLY



BUILDINGS



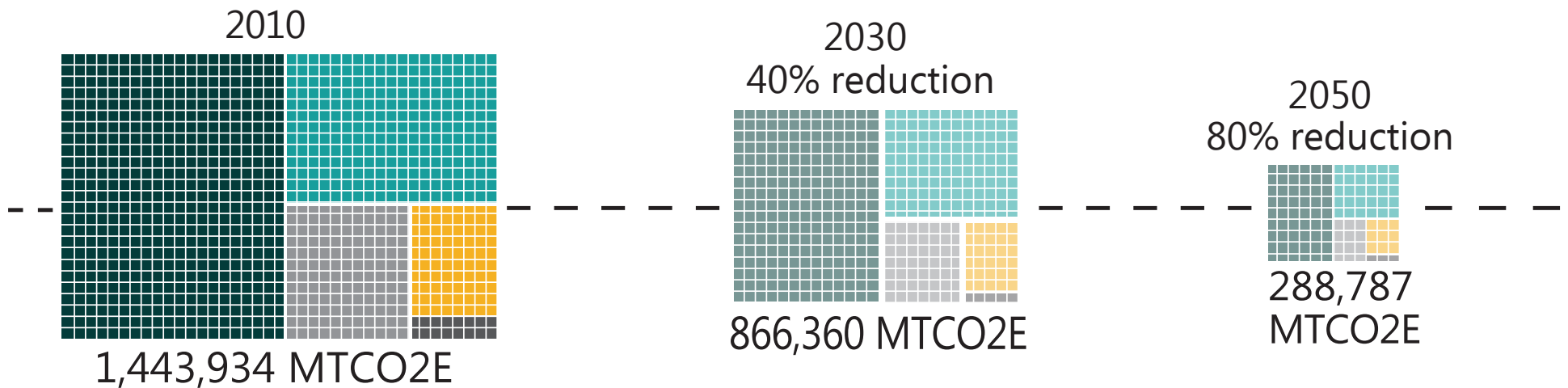
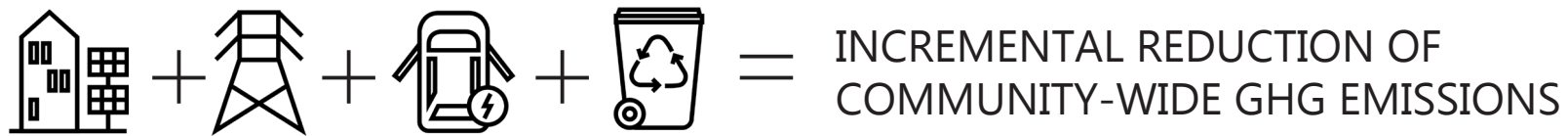
WASTE



INTRODUCTION: COMMUNITY-WIDE OUTCOMES

By tracking and aggressively addressing the four in-scope areas of the Energy Action Plan (buildings, energy supply, transportation, and waste), the City of Fayetteville will strive to achieve a community-wide reduction in greenhouse gases (GHG), measured in total metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions (MTCO₂E).

These targets are derived from the goals set by the 1997 Kyoto Protocol and the 2015 Paris Agreement, at which leaders from around the globe committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in an effort to halt and reverse the planet's rapidly changing climate. These targets were suggested, vetted, and encouraged by community stakeholders and City staff. Further discussion of this outcome is available in chapters 2 and 3.



For the reduction target, a baseline year of 2010 is used as it is the first year Fayetteville conducted a comprehensive GHG inventory. Rationale, reporting procedures, and results from Fayetteville's GHG Inventories from 2010-2016 are available in Appendix B.

INTRODUCTION: SECTOR-LEVEL GOALS

The following goals were set and prioritized through community and City staff input, expert stakeholder direction, and administrative review. More in-depth discussion of each goal, strategies for reaching the goal, and implementation plans are available in Chapter 3.

CROSS-SECTOR:

- Reduce average housing and transportation costs to 45% of area median income
- Develop and expand Fayetteville's reputation as a hub for socially and economically responsible business development, entrepreneurship, and green jobs
- Build local support for national carbon emission reduction and carbon capture strategies

BUILDINGS:

- Complete periodic feasibility analyses of building energy code updates
- Achieve 3% annual reduction in overall energy usage in buildings
- Improve the health, distribution, coverage, and effectiveness of Fayetteville's urban forest

ENERGY SUPPLY:

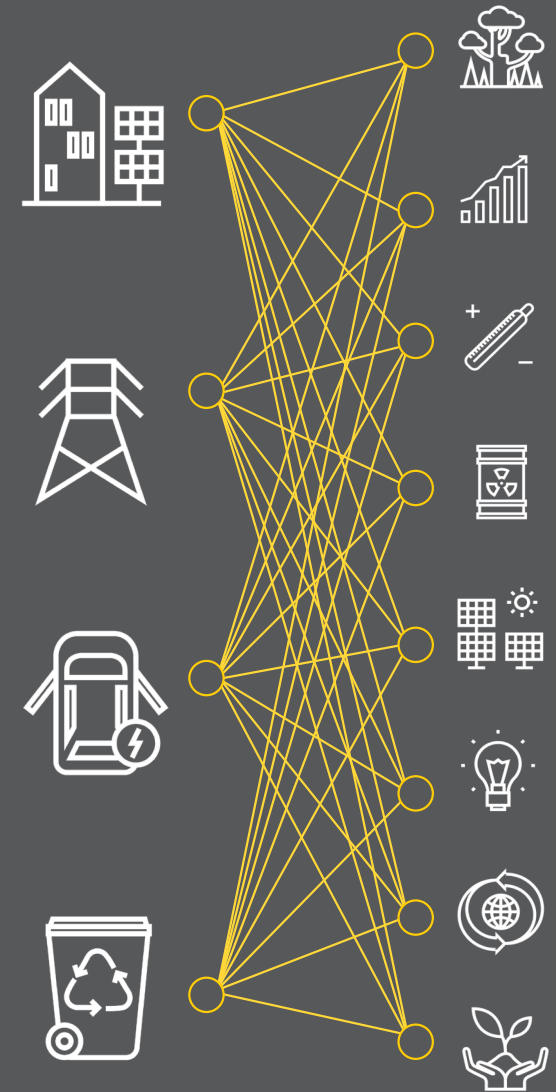
- Achieve 100% local government clean energy by 2030
- Achieve 50% community-wide clean energy by 2030
- Achieve 100% community-wide clean energy by 2050

TRANSPORTATION:

- Reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled to 2010 levels by 2030
- Achieve 25% bike/walk/transit mode share by 2030

WASTE:

- Achieve 40% total waste diversion from the landfill by 2027



CHAPTER THREE: ENERGY SUPPLY

STRATEGY 2: ADVOCATE TO INCREASE LOCAL RENEWABLE INSTALLATIONS

Fayetteville can become a regional leader in advocating for small scale and community-scale, privately owned solar installations. Small scale solar refers to individual homeowners and businesses installing solar to off-set their own electricity needs. Solar arrays can be easily designed into new structures and retrofitted into existing ones. The City can incentivize small scale solar by reducing regulatory barriers and creating a fast track approval process. Community-scaled solar refers to larger solar installations that allow customers to invest by buying shares in the project to off-set their power needs.

The following actions are designed to encourage and incentivize the development of small and community scale clean energy generation:

ACTION ITEMS:	TIMELINE	PRIMARY STAKEHOLDERS
Investigate community shared solar or community wind to encourage procurement of renewable energy supplies. Community sharing programs allow residents to buy or lease a portion of a shared alternative energy system.	Ongoing	Sustainability
Assess if regulatory restrictions or undue burden exists for the development of residential and small businesses renewable energy installations.	Short-term	Building Safety, IT Sustainability
Earn recognition as a Solar-Ready community.	Short-term	Building Safety, Sustainability, IT
Explore incentives to support the development of renewable energy.	Long-term	Sustainability, Finance
Encourage the development of residential and small business renewable energy sources using the existing net-metering program.	Short-term	Sustainability
Build the necessary distribution or storage infrastructure to support further investment in clean energy sources.	Long-term	Sustainability, Utilities
Integrate clean power job skills training into local job development activities or plans	Short-term	Economic Development, Sustainability
Evaluate the feasibility of leasing public land for renewable energy	Short-term	Sustainability, Legal, Finance



How to Become a Solar-friendly Community through SolSmart

A National Designation and Solar Technical Assistance Program

NLC NATIONAL
LEAGUE
OF CITIES

CITIES STRONG TOGETHER



About the National League of Cities



- **Member Organization**

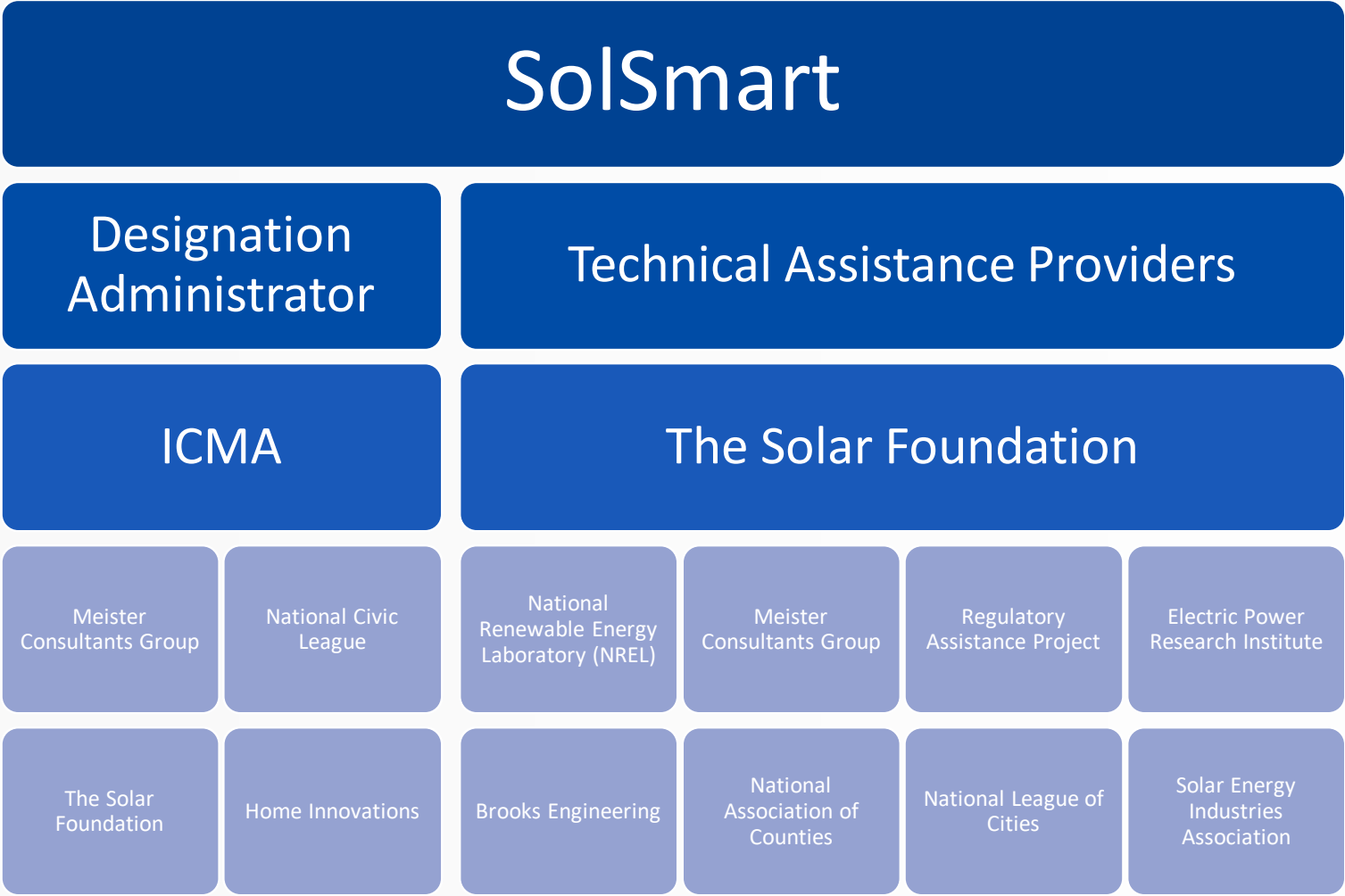
- **The National League of Cities is part of the SolSmart Technical Assistance team**
- **Dedicated to helping city leaders build better communities**
- **Serve as a resource to, and advocate for, the more than 19,000 cities, villages, and towns we represent**
- **Help local officials examine issues and develop new skills through original research, technical assistance, and networking opportunities**
- **Work in partnership with 49 state municipal leagues**

About SolSmart



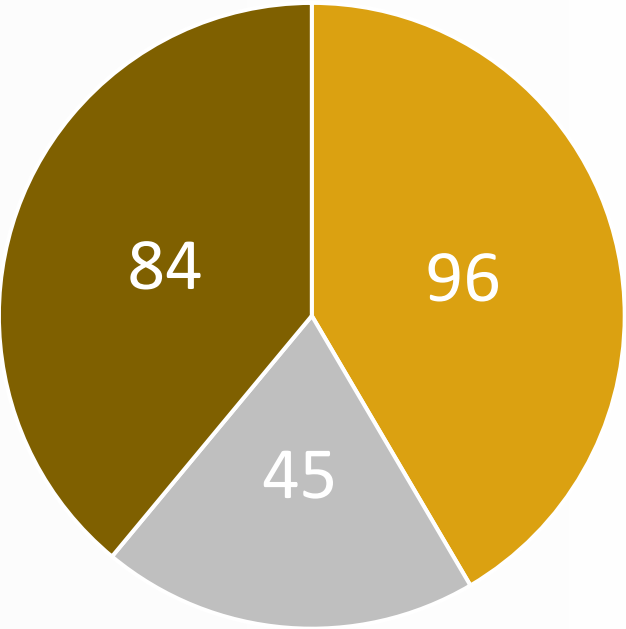
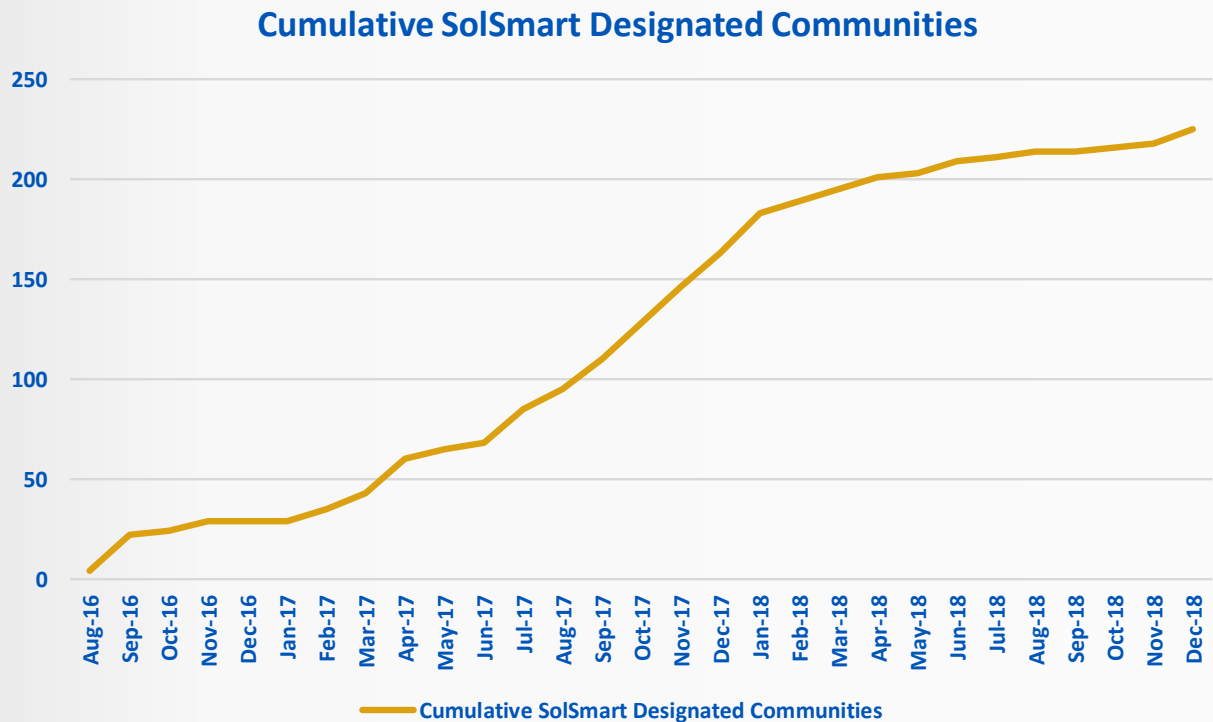
- **Funding**
 - US Department of Energy (DOE) funds SolSmart through its Solar Energy Technology Office (SETO)
- **Goal**
 - Designate 300 US communities as a SolSmart community by October 2020
- **Designation**
 - SolSmart nationally recognizes local solar achievements by designating communities SolSmart Gold, Silver, or Bronze
- **Technical Assistance**
 - To help local governments that might currently lack necessary resources or knowledge achieve SolSmart designation, or to help communities pursue a higher level of designation

The SolSmart Team



SolSmart Designation Stats

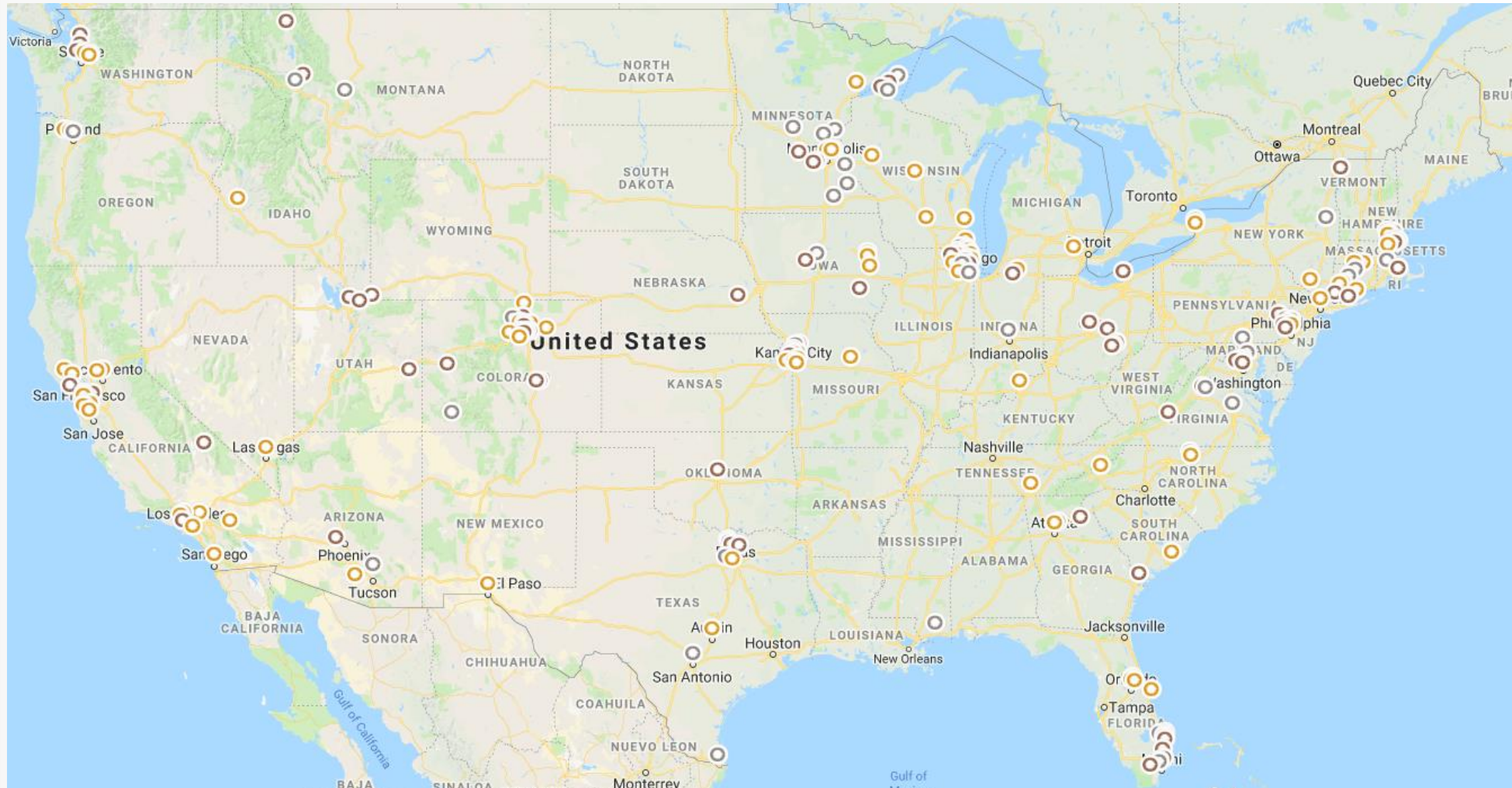
225 Designated Communities as of January 1, 2019



■ SolSmart Gold ■ SolSmart Silver ■ SolSmart Bronze

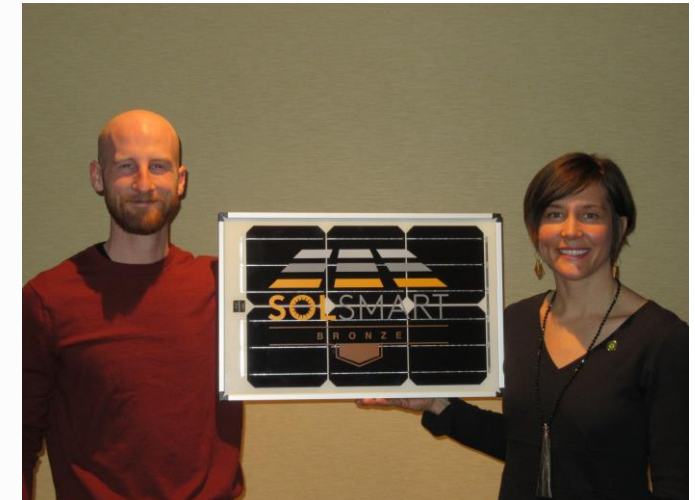
SolSmart Celebrates 200 Designated Communities (5/1/2018)

SolSmart Designated Communities



[Click the map to see all SolSmart designated communities](#)

Celebrating SolSmart Communities Nationwide



Designation Structure



- ☐ Complete 3 prerequisites
- ☐ 20 points in Permitting
- ☐ 20 points in Planning/Zoning
- ☐ 60 total points



- ☐ SolSmart Bronze
- ☐ Complete 2 prerequisites
- ☐ 100 total points



- ☐ SolSmart Silver
- ☐ Complete 1 prerequisite
- ☐ 200 total points

- The SolSmart scorecard is used to baseline a community's current solar processes and identify areas for technical assistance in 8 categories**

SolSmart Categories



- **Permitting - 15 credits, 135 pts**
 - Implement permitting best practices to provide solar developers and installers a transparent, efficient, and cost-effective approval processes that also protects your community's valuable staff time.
- **Planning, Zoning, & Development Regulations - 20 credits, 160 pts**
 - Provide maximum siting options for rooftop and ground-mounted solar projects while preserving your community's character and historic resources.
- **Inspection - 6 credits, 80 pts**
 - Protect public health and safety while ensuring compliance with state and local codes.
- **Construction Codes - 6 credits, 55 pts**
 - Adopt applicable codes and standards that provide clear guidance on solar installation requirements and solar-ready construction.
- **Solar Rights - 7 credits, 50 pts**
 - Protect the right to sunlight for current and future solar consumers through solar access ordinances or easements.
- **Utility Engagement - 8 credits, 100 pts**
 - Discuss and implement your community's goals for solar energy, community solar, net metering, and interconnection with local utility.
- **Community Engagement - 18 credits, 225 pts**
 - Support local solar energy development through public education and engagement efforts, group purchase programs, and participation in state-level solar conversations.
- **Market Development and Finance - 15 credits, 190 pts**
 - Lead the way with solar installations on public facilities and grow the local solar market by providing information on, or expanding, local financing options and incentives.

SolSmart Scorecard



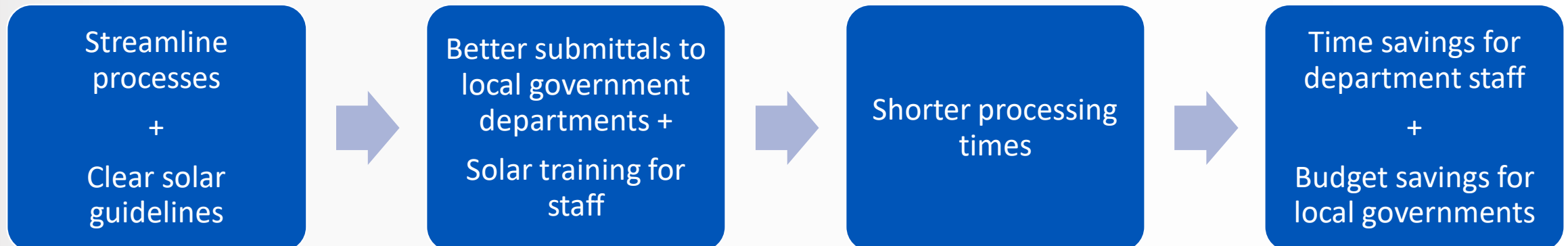
- The designation scorecard is comprised of 95 unique credits in 8 different categories that aim to improve local solar markets
- Each action has a corresponding point value ranging from 5 to 20
- Communities are awarded points based on credits they have completed to make their local processes more solar-friendly
- Points are verified by the Designation Administrator through a review of documents provided by the community
- Communities that complete the required level of prerequisites and points are awarded SolSmart designation
- SolSmart can provide technical assistance for each of the 95 credits

- SolSmart TA providers work with elected officials, local government staff, and community members to help communities update processes using established best practices
- Funded by SolSmart, no-cost to the community
- Communities need to commit staff time to working with SolSmart
- Communities must demonstrate a commitment to achieving designation
- **TA Delivery**
 - Online – resource library, email, webinars, templates
 - Phone – conference calls
 - In person – site visits, technical workshops

SolSmart Benefits



- SolSmart technical assistance and designation helps communities create better local markets for solar energy by cutting red tape, making it easier and more affordable for homes and businesses to install solar.
- National recognition as a leading solar community
- SolSmart Plaque to proudly display in City Hall
- Promote local, well-paying jobs
- Improve financial returns for homeowners and local businesses
- Achieve local climate and energy goals



SolSmart In the News



Corinth, TX (4/17/2018)

- [Corinth designated SolSmart Silver for advancing solar energy growth](#)

Chicago, IL (2/2/2018)

- [Southland communities honored for work in solar energy](#)

Chicago, IL (11/1/2017)

- [Chicago-area mayors hope collaboration will spark more interest in solar](#)

Atlanta, GA (6/30/2017)

- [City of Atlanta Recognized for Leadership in Solar Energy Growth by the U.S. Department of Energy](#)

Davis, CA (5/3/2017)

- [Davis earns Gold Award for commitment to solar](#)

Charlottesville, VA (4/24/2017)

- [City of Charlottesville Earns National SolSmart Award for Advancing Solar Energy Growth](#)

Steps to Become a SolSmart Community



- **Contact Nick Kasza (kasza@nlc.org) to set up a consultation call to learn more about the program**
- **Complete a SolSmart scorecard to establish your community's solar baseline**
 - **Assistance is available to help a community complete a scorecard**
- **If required, work with TA providers to complete credits and achieve designation!**

SolSmart Application

There are three levels of SolSmart designation for communities – below are the requirements for each:

BRONZE:

- Provide a Solar Statement outlining your community's solar goals and commit to tracking key metrics such as number and capacity of installed Photovoltaic (PV) systems.
- Fulfill required actions in both of the Foundational Categories:
 - Permitting
 - Planning, Zoning, and Development Regulations
- Earn at least 20 points in each of the two Foundational Categories (above).
- Earn a total of 20 points from actions across the six Special Focus Categories: Inspection; Construction Codes; Solar Rights; Utility Engagement; Community Engagement; and Market Development and Finance.

Note: Actions in any of the Special Focus Categories count toward the 20-point target.

SILVER:

- Fulfill the requirements to become a SolSmart Bronze Community.
- Complete the two Silver-required actions in the Planning, Zoning, and Development Regulations and Inspection categories.
- Earn 100 points overall from actions taken in any combination of categories.

GOLD:

- Fulfill the requirements to become a SolSmart Silver Community.
- Complete the two Gold-required actions in the Permitting and Planning, Zoning, and Development Regulations categories.
- Earn 200 points overall from actions taken in any combination of categories.

SPECIAL AWARDS:

- Communities that earn 60% of the points in a given category are eligible for special recognition.

Community Data

Community applying:

State:

Community website:

Population:

Other solar awards/recognition earned by community:

kW of installed solar or number of installations:

Contact Information

Local contact:

Contact title:

Organization:

Department:

Contact email:

Contact phone:

I am authorized to apply for and seek recognition for my community.

I understand that community data submitted through this application will be shared online.

STEP 1: SOLAR STATEMENT

PR-1: Solar Statement – Required for Designation

The Solar Statement should address the items listed in the bullets below. The Statement should be signed by an individual who can speak on behalf of the local government. The Statement may be provided on local government letterhead in pdf format or as a weblink. Please find a Solar Statement template that you can download at: www.solsmart.org/resources/sample-solar-statement/

SOLAR STATEMENT



Tuesday, October 16, 2018

International City/County Management Association
777 North Capitol St. NE, Ste. 500
Washington, DC 20002

The Solar Foundation
1717 Pennsylvania AVE NW, Ste. 750
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Scott Annis and Zach Greene:

On behalf of community name, I am proud to announce our commitment to become a SolSmart-designated community. In partnership with the SolSmart team, community name's dedicated staff members will work to improve solar market conditions, making it faster, easier, and more affordable for our residents and businesses to install solar energy systems. These efforts will also increase the efficiency of local processes related to solar development, which may save our local government time and money.

[OPTIONAL: SolSmart builds upon our community's participation in relevant program(s) participation, which resulted in enter relevant outcomes.]

Community name will leverage SolSmart to achieve the following goals:

- Choose an item or enter a custom description.
- Choose an item or type a custom description.
- Choose an item or type a custom description.

These efforts demonstrate that our community is committed to driving continual improvement in our solar market, and in the process of doing so, all the related areas identified as community priorities in our relevant plans or initiatives.

In order to measure progress along the way, Community name will track key metrics related to solar energy deployment, such as installed solar capacity the and number of installations across sectors.

[OPTIONAL: In these efforts, we call on our residents, businesses, non-profits, and others to get involved, and we invite everyone to stay tuned by visiting solar landing page URL]

Inquiries related to community name's SolSmart participation can be directed to communications contact at E-mail address or phone number.

Sincerely,

Signed name

Printed name
Title

Communities interested in pursuing SolSmart designation must indicate their commitment to supporting solar development in their community. These letters should include:

- A commitment to participate in the SolSmart designation process
- A statement of solar goals, areas of focus or community priorities (e.g. Encouraging solar PV development on vacant lots or supporting non-profit led initiatives)
- Past achievements or programs related to solar PV and/or renewable energy
- Commitment to tracking metrics related to solar PV and/or provide benchmark of available solar metrics (i.e. number of installed municipal systems or growth in residential installations)
- A commitment of staff time and resources to improve the local environment for solar PV

These letters do not need to be more than a page in length. The SolSmart team can assist communities in prioritizing and establishing goals.



Documentation: (Please share a link to a public webpage where your Solar Statement is displayed or attach it as a document.)

STEP 2: FOUNDATIONAL CATEGORIES: PERMITTING AND PLANNING, ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT




To earn SolSmart Bronze designation, communities must:

- Complete the required actions in both Foundational Categories – i.e., Permitting and Planning, Zoning and Development Regulations.
- Earn at least 20 points in each of the Foundational Categories.

Permitting

Action	Points	We've done this!	Documentation
P-1: Post an online checklist detailing the required permit(s), submittals, and steps of your community's permitting process for small rooftop solar PV (Required).	Req'd		Share link:
P-2: Post an online statement confirming a three-business day turnaround time for small rooftop solar PV (Required for Gold).	20		Share link:
P-3: Distinguish between solar PV systems qualifying for streamlined and standard permit review.	5		Share link:
P-4: Require no more than one permit application form for a small rooftop solar PV.	5		Share link:
P-5a: Review permit fees for residential and commercial solar PV. Compile findings in a memo.	5		Share link:
 Earn additional points: P-5b: Demonstrate that residential permit fees for solar PV are \$400 or less.	5		Share link:
 Earn additional points: P-5c: Demonstrate that commercial permit fees for solar PV are based on cost-recovery and capped at a reasonable level so fees do not become a net revenue source. (e.g. fees cover the cost of the staff time required to review and process the permit application).	5		Share link:
P-6: Process small rooftop solar PV permits in 10 business days or fewer.	10		Share link:
P-7: Adopt a standard solar PV permit application form aligned with best practices (e.g. Solar ABCs).	10		Share link:
P-8: Train permitting staff on best practices for permitting solar PV and/or solar and storage systems. Training must have occurred in the past five years.	10		Share link:
P-9: Train fire and safety staff on solar PV and/or solar and storage systems. Training must have occurred in the past five years.	10		Share link:
P-10: Develop a regular communication schedule to solicit recommendations from solar PV installers regarding procedural changes.	10		Share link:
P-11: Provide an online process for solar PV permit submission and approval.	20		Share link:
P-12a: Share site specific solar PV and/or solar and storage permit data, including addresses, with first responders and their departments. (e.g. Through software that allows users to view searchable, filterable data about a specific site and system).	10		Share link:
P-12b: Share site specific solar PV and/or solar and storage system permit data, including addresses, with other local government departments (Not including first responders and their departments). (e.g. Through software that allows users to view searchable, filterable data about a specific site and system).	10		Share link:

Planning, Zoning and Development Regulations Cont.

Action	Points	We've done this!	Documentation
PZD-1a: Review zoning requirements and identify restrictions that intentionally or unintentionally prohibit solar PV development. Compile findings in a memo. (Required). Examples include: height restrictions, set-back requirements, screening, etc.	Req'd		Share link:
 Earn additional points: PZD-1b: Present PZD-1a memo findings to planning commission or relevant zoning body.	5		Share link:
 Earn additional points: PZD-1c: Draft proposed language for changes to zoning code based on PZD-1a memo and PZD-1b dialogue. Involve planners and/or local zoning experts in the creation of the draft language.	5		Share link:
PZD-2a: Post an online document from the Planning/Zoning Department that states accessory use solar PV is allowed by-right in all major zones (e.g. via a zoning determination letter). (Required for Silver, unless PZD-2b is achieved. If PZD-2b is achieved, PZD-2a is not necessary.)	0 Req'd for Silver		Share link:
PZD-2b: Codify in the zoning ordinance that accessory use solar PV is explicitly allowed by-right in all major zones. Zoning ordinance language should not include intentional or unintentional barriers to accessory use solar, such as limits to visibility from public rights-of-way, excessive restrictions to system size, glare studies, subjective design reviews, and neighbor consent requirements. (Required for Gold; optional for Silver.)	20 Req'd for Gold		Share link:
PZD-3a: Review existing planning documents and identify new opportunities (not already included) to integrate solar PV into planning goals. Compile findings in a memo.	5		Share link:
 Earn additional points: PZD-3b: Draft proposed language and a timeline for the inclusion of solar PV in existing and/or future plans. Involved planners in the creation of draft language.	5		Share link:
PZD-4: Provide clear guidance for the installation of solar PV on historic properties and in special overlay districts.	10		Share link:
PZD-5a: Include quantifiable metrics and/or specific actions for solar PV development in the most current version of relevant local plans (e.g. energy plan, climate plan, comprehensive plan).	10		Share link:
PZD-5b: Develop a primary use solar PV assessment that identifies all feasible sites for large-scale solar PV development within a jurisdiction.	10		Share link:
PZD-6: Include guidelines for active and passive solar in development regulations (e.g. providing guidance for orientation of structures in subdivision regulations).	10		Share link:
PZD-7: Provide development incentives for solar PV within the subdivision or zoning process, or as part of other development incentives (e.g., density or height bonuses for buildings that plan to install solar or tax-increment	20		Share link:
PZD-8: Incentivize solar PV development on parking lots, vacant lots, buffer lands around uses with nuisances (e.g. refineries, wastewater plants), brownfields, airport safety zones (with FAA approval), and non-building structures.	20		Share link:
PZD-9: Train planning staff on best practices in planning and zoning for solar PV. Training must have occurred in the past five years.	10		Share link:

<p>PZD-10: Ensure that the zoning ordinance does one or more of the following for accessory use solar:</p> <p>↪ PZD-10a Permits small ground-mounted solar PV as an accessory use in at least one zoning district.</p> <p>↪ PZD-10b Exempts rooftop solar PV from certain restrictions on accessory uses (e.g. height limits, rooftop equipment screening requirements, or other restrictions).</p> <p>↪ PZD-10c Exempts small ground-mounted solar PV from certain restrictions on accessory uses (e.g. setbacks, coverage or impervious surface calculations, or other restrictions).</p>	5		Share link:
<p>PZD-11: Post an online factsheet that provides an overview of what zoning allows for solar PV under what conditions (e.g. types and sizes of solar arrays permitted, the processes required, and other relevant information).</p>	5		Share link:
<p>PZD-12: Ensure that the zoning ordinance does one or more of the following for primary use solar:</p> <p>↪ PZD-12a Establishes a clear regulatory pathway for primary use solar PV (e.g. through a special use permit or through inclusion among allowed conditional uses).</p> <p>↪ PZD-12b Establishes solar energy zones and/or solar overlays for primary use solar PV.</p>	5		Share link:

STEP 3: SPECIAL FOCUS CATEGORIES


To earn SolSmart Bronze designation, communities must:

- Earn 20 points (total) from actions taken across the 6 Special Focus Categories: Inspection; Construction Codes; Solar Rights; Utility Engagement; Community Engagement; or Market Development and Finance. Any action in any Special Focus Category counts toward the goal of earning 20 points.



Special Focus: **Inspection**

Action	Points	We've done this!	Documentation
I-1: Train inspection staff on best practices for permitting and inspecting solar PV and/or solar and storage systems. Training must have occurred within the past five years. (Required for Silver and Gold).	20		Share link:
I-2: Require no more than two inspections for accessory use solar PV.	10		Share link:
I-3: Offer inspection appointment times in lieu of appointment windows for solar PV.	10		Share link:
I-4: Post solar PV inspection requirements online, including the inspection process and what details inspectors will review.	10		Share link:
I-5: Complete solar PV inspections within 5 business days after inspection request.	10		Share link:
I-6: Provide an online process for solar PV inspection scheduling.	20		Share link:



Special Focus: **Construction Codes**

Action	Points	We've done this!	Documentation
CC-1a: Provide Solar Ready Construction Guidelines for property/real estate developers to enable lower cost installation of future solar PV installations on buildings. Provide these resources at the permitting office	5		Share link:
 Earn additional points: CC-1b: Include guidance for solar PV on parking lots and other types of non-traditional structures.	5		Share link:
CC-2: Incentivize new construction to be solar ready in at least one zoning district.	10		Share link:
CC-3: Post online design guidelines for solar PV aligned with National Electrical Code and fire code.	5		Share link:
CC-4: Require new construction to be solar ready in at least one zoning district by adopting Appendix U (International Code Council), Appendix RB (International Energy Conservation Code), or another mechanism.	10		Share link:
CC-5: Codify a solar requirement for new construction and/or retrofits meeting a specific threshold, in at least one zoning district.	20		Share link:



Special Focus: Solar Rights

Action	Points	We've done this!	Documentation
SR-1: Post an online summary of state policies related to a property owner's solar access and solar rights, including links to state-level policy.	5		Share link:
SR-2: Post consumer protection resources on solar PV online.	5		Share link:
SR-3: Enable solar rights through a local solar access ordinance.	10		Share link:
SR-4: Post an online checklist detailing the steps for recording solar easements for property owners.	10		Share link:
SR-5a: Engage homeowners and neighborhood associations to discuss restrictive requirements for solar PV with the goal of reducing or eliminating them. Compile summary and next steps in a memo.	10		Share link:
 Earn additional points: SR-5b: Encourage subdivisions to consider shared solar allowances.	5		Share link:
 Earn additional points: SR-5c: Develop design guidelines for solar PV in partnership with homeowner associations.	5		Share link:




Special Focus: Utility Engagement

Action	Points	We've done this!	Documentation
U-1: Inform staff of best practices for integrating interconnection with electrical inspections.	5		Share link:
U-2: Discuss community solar programs with the local utility. Compile summary and next steps in a memo.	10		Share link:
U-3a: Discuss community goals for solar PV, net metering, and/or interconnection processes with the local utility and explore areas for future collaboration. Compile summary and next steps in a memo.	10		Share link:
 Earn additional points: U-3b: Coordinate with regional organizations or other local governments to engage utilities.	5		Share link:
U-4: Demonstrate coordination between local government inspectors and utility staff to reduce Permission to Operate timeline.	20		Share link:
U-5: Launch or support a utility-provided community solar program.	20		Share link:
 Earn additional points: U-5b: Encourage low-to-moderate income (LMI) participation in utility-provided community solar program through program design and/or financing support options.	10		Share link:
U-6: Provide residents with Community Choice Aggregation/Energy that includes solar PV as a power generation source.	20		Share link:

Special Focus: Community Engagement

Action	Points	We've done this!	Documentation
CE-1: Convene an active energy task force or solar working group that meets at least three times per year.	10		Share link:
CE-2: Post a solar landing page on local government's website with information on the community's solar goals and local resources for solar development.	10		Share link:
CE-3: Provide technical assistance and/or programs or processes to support solar PV development on non-profit and/or community-service orientated facilities.	10		Share link:
CE-4a: Support or host a community-wide group purchase program (e.g., Solarize). Program must have occurred within the last 5 years.	20		Share link:
 Earn additional points: CE-4b: Encourage low-to-moderate income (LMI) participation in community-wide group purchase program through program design and/or financing support options.	10		Share link:
CE-5a: Host a solar workshop open to the general public and/or local government staff explaining solar PV opportunities and policies. Workshop must have occurred within the last 5 years.	5		Share link:
CE-5b: Distribute educational materials at relevant community events and/or through local government channels.	5		Share link:
CE-5c: Establish partnerships with local organizations within your community on solar PV multi-year goals and/or planned initiatives.	5		Share link:
CE-5d: Demonstrate local government support for local solar projects through speeches, press releases, blog posts, opinion articles, etc.	5		Share link:
CE-5e: Engage the community through recurring public meetings, focus groups, or other similar events around climate, energy, or sustainability plans and/or goals.	5		Share link:
CE-6: Distribute solar job training and career opportunities in coordination with local colleges and/or workforce development organizations.	20		Share link:
CE-7: Conduct feasibility analysis for solar PV on brownfields and/or other under-utilized properties.	10		Share link:
CE-8: Install or lease land for solar PV development on brownfields and/or other under-utilized properties.	20		Share link:
CE-9: Engage with regional organizations on advancing solar policies in the region such as unified permitting processes and group procurement opportunities.	20		Share link:
CE-10: Demonstrate activity in state-level conversations regarding solar PV.	20		Share link:
CE-11: Post an online solar map for your community.	20		Share link:
CE-12a: Support a third party-provided community solar program. Note: this cannot be the same community solar program for which credit was received under Utility Engagement.	20		Share link:
 Earn additional points: CE-12b: Encourage low-to-moderate income (LMI) participation in third party-provided community solar program through program design and/or financing support options.	10		Share link:

Special Focus: Market Development and Finance

Action	Points	We've done this!	Documentation
MDF-1: Provide online resources on active solar installers and/or local incentives for solar PV.	5		Share link:
MDF-2: Make solar PV metrics publicly available.	5		Share link:
MDF-3: Provide information to consumers about residential and commercial solar PV financing options.	5		Share link:
MDF-4: Conduct feasibility analysis for solar PV installations on/at local government facilities.	10		Share link:
MDF-5: Install solar PV on/at local government facilities.	20		Share link:
MDF-6a: Provide PACE financing in your community.	10		Share link:
 Earn additional points: MDF-6b: Demonstrate that PACE financing has been used to finance solar PV in your community.	10		Share link:
MDF-7a: Provide local incentives (e.g. permit fee waivers or rebates) or locally-enabled finance (e.g., a revolving loan fund) for solar PV.	20		Share link:
MDF-7b: Provide local incentives for solar PV to low-to-moderate income (LMI) households, Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs), and/or non-profit organizations that provide community services.	5		Share link:
MDF-8: Engage local banks, credit unions, foundations and/or community funds about lending for solar PV projects through in-person meetings, discussions, and/or workshops. Compile summary and next steps in a memo.	20		Share link:
MDF-9: Demonstrate that the community's installed per capita capacity is above top 20% of states (>99 watts/person).	20		Share link:
MDF-10a: Conduct feasibility analysis for solar PV integrated with other technologies such as combined heat and power or electric vehicle charging on/at a local government facility.	10		Share link:
 Earn additional points: MDF-10b: Install solar PV integrated with other technologies such as combined heat and power or electric vehicle charging on/at a local government facility.	20		Share link:
MDF-11a: Conduct feasibility analysis for solar PV plus storage on/at a critical local government facility.	10		Share link:
 Earn additional points: MDF-11b: Install solar PV plus storage on/at a critical local government facility.	20		Share link:

INNOVATIVE ACTIONS

The actions identified in the categories above represent many of the most common and impactful efforts communities are taking to reduce soft costs and make going solar easier and more affordable for residents. However, we know that communities across the country are developing innovative ways to help reduce soft costs. If your community has taken action to reduce soft costs that wasn't captured in the above application, please share it with us in the table below. Innovative actions will be reviewed by a team of solar experts and each action may be worth up to 20 points.

Innovative Actions

Category	Action(s)	Documentation
Permitting		Share link:
Planning, Zoning and Development Regulations		Share link:
Inspection		Share link:
Construction Codes		Share link:
Solar Rights		Share link:
Utility Engagement		Share link:
Community Engagement		Share link:
Market Development and Finance		Share link:

Designation Checklist

Checkboxes will not autopopulate

Step
Completed

STEP 1: SOLAR STATEMENT

Solar Statement

Statement Submitted

☐

STEP 2: FOUNDATIONAL CATEGORIES

Permitting

Required for Bronze: P-1

Points:
20+ required for Bronze

☐

Planning, Zoning, & Development
Regulations

Required for Bronze: PZD-1a

Points:
20+ required for Bronze

☐

STEP 3: SPECIAL FOCUS CATEGORY POINTS

Inspection

Points:

☐

Construction Codes

Points:

☐

Solar Rights

Points:

☐

Utility Engagement

Points:

☐

Community Engagement

Points:

☐

Market Development and Finance

Points:

☐

Special Focus Points
Must be 20 or greater for Bronze

TOTAL POINTS including foundational
Must be at least 100 for Silver and 200 for Gold