



# A New Solar Designation Program for Communities

## WHAT IS SOLSMART?

**SolSmart** is a **new community designation program** designed to recognize communities that have taken steps to make it easier for businesses and residents to go solar. Communities pursuing SolSmart designation will be eligible for **no-cost technical assistance** from a team of national solar experts.

The SolSmart program aims to **reduce solar “soft costs,”** the non-hardware costs of going solar like **permitting, financing, installation labor, and customer acquisition.** These costs are passed on to solar customers and can increase the time and money it takes to install a solar energy system.

The SolSmart designation program will provide **high-profile, national recognition** for communities that have made it cheaper and easier for solar customers to invest in solar energy. In addition, achieving designation will let solar companies know that a community is “open for business,” attracting new solar businesses and helping SolSmart communities share the economic development benefits attached to the solar industry.



## WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Any city or county government in the United States can apply for designation and receive no-cost technical assistance. The SolSmart program is already working with communities around the U.S. and looks forward to working with cities and counties in all 50 states and D.C.

## WHY PARTICIPATE?

### STAKEHOLDER BENEFITS

- Reducing soft costs can **increase return on investment for solar customers.** Complex or poorly-defined local government policies and processes can add \$2,500 or more to the cost of going solar.
- Eliminating red tape and making approval processes more efficient can **save local governments time and money,** helping communities better manage constrained budgets and limited taxpayer resources.
- Improving local processes and policies for going solar can **improve business prospects for solar companies.** More than one-third of solar installation companies say they avoid serving communities because of permitting difficulties.

### COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- **National recognition** on the SolSmart website, outreach to the media, and other public announcements.
- An **opportunity to receive awards** for exceeding basic program requirements and further distinguishing your community from its peers.
- The opportunity to host a SolSmart Advisor, a **fully funded temporary staff** assigned to between 30 to 40 communities for up to six months.
- Ability to access free technical assistance from national experts like The Solar Foundation, National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Meister Consultants Group, Brooks Engineering, Regulatory Assistance Project, and Electric Power Research Institute.

APPLY NOW AT [SOLSMART.ORG](http://SOLSMART.ORG)



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## HOW CAN MY COMMUNITY PARTICIPATE?

Any city or county, regardless of previous experience with solar energy, can apply for SolSmart designation. Once a community completes an intake form at [www.solsmart.org](http://www.solsmart.org), our team will review it to determine whether the community meets the criteria requirements for designation. Communities have the opportunity to receive one of three designation levels — Bronze, Silver, or Gold. All communities committed to pursuing designation have the opportunity to receive no-cost technical assistance, however those communities that currently do not meet the requirements for any level of designation will receive priority access to technical assistance, with communities descending in priority based on existing level of designation.



## SOLSMART ADVISORS

Communities pursuing SolSmart designation have the opportunity to apply to host a SolSmart Advisor. SolSmart Advisors **are program-funded and trained staff that will work in a community or region for engagements lasting up to six months.** Advisors will evaluate local solar policies, procedures, and programs to develop action plans and apply proven best practices. Through these efforts, Advisors will assist communities in addressing soft costs and achieving SolSmart designation.

Interested communities need to apply to host a SolSmart Advisor. There will be a competitive selection process based on level of need, potential impact, project feasibility, long-term opportunities for Advisors, Early Adopter status, and a commitment to pursue designation. Communities should visit [www.solsmart.org](http://www.solsmart.org) for the next open application period.

## THE SOLSMART TEAM

SolSmart is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative. A coalition of partner organizations are working together on SolSmart to offer a diverse array of expertise to communities to meet their needs. Team members have extensive experience and familiarity working with municipalities, solar installers, homebuilders, and more.

### DESIGNATION PROGRAM:

International City/County Management Association (Lead), National Civic League, Home Innovation Research Labs, Meister Consultants Group, The Solar Foundation

### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

The Solar Foundation (Lead), National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Meister Consultants Group, National League of Cities, National Association of Counties, Solar Energy Industries Association, Electric Power Research Institute, Regulatory Assistance Project, Brooks Engineering



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