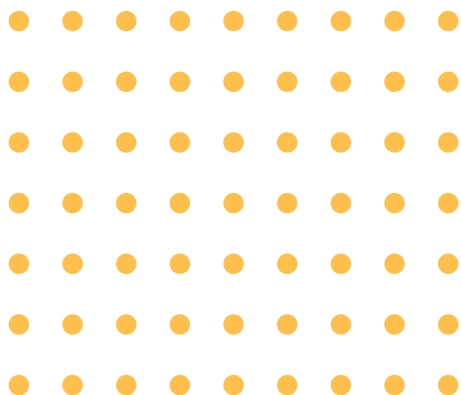


REGIONAL  
**PROGRAM  
GUIDE**  
June 2023



# SolSmart – Regional Pathway Program Guide

## Welcome to SolSmart!

Congratulations on taking action to expand opportunities for solar in your community! In the next ten years, the amount of solar energy in the U.S. is expected to grow dramatically- by 2033 there is likely to be five times more solar installed than there is today!<sup>1</sup> By implementing solar-friendly policies, not only can you help accelerate this transition to clean energy, but you can also ensure your community is poised to take advantage of the many benefits. Becoming SolSmart-designated means you are helping your residents save money, protecting natural resources, bolstering local resilience and increasing job opportunities in the clean energy sector. Through SolSmart, your community will get access to free technical assistance and learn how to implement strategies that make solar more affordable and accessible to all residents. Your SolSmart designation will send a signal that your community is “open for solar business,” encouraging growth of local solar companies and other sustainability-minded businesses.



### Recognizing Local Solar Achievements

Since 2016, nearly 500 communities across the U.S. have received SolSmart designation. Together, we are making solar more affordable, attaining local clean energy goals and creating jobs and opportunities for all Americans to share in the benefits of clean, renewable energy!

This guide is a comprehensive resource to help you implement solar best practices in your region and gain national recognition by earning SolSmart designation! This guide will help you to navigate the “Regional Pathway,” which is applicable to regional organizations that represent multiple local governments and counties in a designated region, but do not have authority over local permitting, planning, zoning and/or inspection processes. Local governments that do not control these processes but only oversee an area of jurisdictions, like a County, should refer to the SolSmart Modified Pathway Program Guide. Local governments that control these processes should refer to the SolSmart Standard Pathway Program Guide.

The SolSmart program will connect you with solar best practices from across the country and provide clear guidance on how to implement these actions. Along the way you will receive points for the actions you take and achieve recognition as a Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum SolSmart designated organization! Throughout this process, our technical assistance providers are available to provide support at no cost. Please [complete this form](#) to get connected with a technical assistance provider and get started on the path to SolSmart designation.

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*A detailed description of each SolSmart criteria with guidance and examples to assist you in implementing solar best practices and achieving points toward designation.*

<sup>1</sup> Solar Energy Industries Association, *Solar Market Insight Report 2022 Year in Review*, March 2023, available at <https://www.seia.org/research-resources/solar-market-insight-report-2022-year-review>

## I. SolSmart Overview

Across the United States, communities are increasingly using solar energy to power their homes and businesses and enjoying the benefits of clean, reliable, and affordable electricity. Rapidly declining prices for solar and related technologies have brought vast amounts of solar energy into the mainstream within a few short years. Homeowners, businesses, schools and local governments are using solar energy to drastically reduce their utility costs, while also reducing the environmental impact of their energy use. As natural disasters become more frequent and intense, solar and energy storage is also bolstering energy resilience.

Local and regional governments play an important role in establishing policies, procedures and programs that impact solar deployment in communities. When local governments create barriers to solar in their local plans, permitting and other policies, either intentionally or unintentionally, they can hinder solar development. Alternately, when local governments provide a supportive environment for solar energy and take steps to streamline permitting, inspection and zoning processes, they expedite the installation of solar PV systems and help make it more affordable for residents and businesses. Regional organizations help guide their local government members to implement these positive changes.

Action at the local level is also fundamental to ensuring that solar programs are equitable and inclusive and ultimately deliver shared benefits to all Americans. SolSmart is committed to the goals of the federal [Justice40 Initiative](#) to provide equitable opportunities for underserved communities which face barriers including fossil dependence, energy burden, environmental and climate hazards, and socio-economic vulnerabilities. SolSmart criteria reflect the importance of developing equitable and inclusive solar policies and programs.

The SolSmart program has two key components. First, the program provides no-cost technical assistance to help organizations follow national best practices to expand solar energy use in their jurisdictions. Second, it recognizes and celebrates these organizations with SolSmart designations of Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum. SolSmart is led by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) and funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO).

### **Local Policies are Important to Reducing Cost**

While the cost of solar panels and equipment has decreased considerably, there are still significant opportunities to reduce “soft costs.” “Soft costs” refer to business or administrative processes that increase the time and money it takes to install a solar energy system — costs that are then passed on to customers. These include costs associated with sales and marketing, permitting processes, planning, zoning considerations, financing and a wide variety of other factors. Overall, these soft costs represent about 64% of the total cost of a solar energy system.<sup>1</sup>

The U.S. Department of Energy’s Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO) funds [SolSmart](#), to help communities remove administrative barriers, streamline processes and improve local policies in ways that further local goals and reduce solar soft costs.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Energy, *Soft Costs Webpage*, available at <https://www.energy.gov/eere/solar/soft-costs>

## Designation Levels

The SolSmart program has developed a set of designation criteria based on established best practices that encourage the growth of solar energy at the local and regional level. The criteria for the Regional Pathway are organized into four categories – Planning, Operational Support, Community Engagement and Market Development. Within each category, SolSmart provides clear guidance and templates to help organizations put these practices into action. Some of the criteria are prerequisites, while others are elective. Each criterion has a corresponding point value. Upon meeting the prerequisites and reaching a sufficient number of points in each category, a participant qualifies for SolSmart designation.

There are four levels of SolSmart designation for regional organizations. Below are the requirements for each level. Organizations that earn 60% of the available points in a category are additionally eligible for a special recognition award.



<b>Bronze</b>	<b>50 Total Points</b>	<b>3 Prerequisite Criteria</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Earn 50 points in the 4 other categories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Solar Statement (PR-1)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Planning and zoning guidance (PR-2)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Planning and zoning training (PR-3)</li> </ul>
<b>Silver</b>	<b>80 Total Points</b>	<b>2 Prerequisite Criteria</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Earn 80 points in the 4 other categories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Permitting training (PR-4)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Inspection training (PR-5)</li> </ul>
<b>Gold</b>	<b>110 Total Points</b>	<b>1 Prerequisite Criteria</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Earn 110 points in the 4 other categories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Post metrics (PR-6)</li> </ul>
<b>Platinum</b>	<b>200 Total Points</b>	<b>3 Prerequisite Criteria</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Earn 200 points in the 4 other categories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Engage member communities (PR-7)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Model solar zoning ordinance (PR-8)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Model permitting and inspection process (PR-9)</li> </ul>

## Criteria Categories

Below is a summary of each category and the types of actions that are recognized as best practices in each.

### **Planning | 7 Criteria | 55 Points**

Solar-friendly planning can help facilitate the rapid expansion of solar energy within a region while ensuring compliance with development standards. *Many of the criteria in the planning category can be verified by providing a link to regional planning documents.*

### **Operational Support | 12 Criteria | 150 Points**

Regional organizations can lead the way by supporting member communities to install solar energy on public facilities and land. Regional organizations can engage with their local utility to discuss goals for solar energy, net metering, interconnection, and community solar. These are high impact actions that can directly lead to an increase in solar energy deployment. *Many of the criteria in the operational support category can be verified by providing documents demonstrating installed solar capacity such as news articles about solar installations, dashboards/metrics showing solar production, and contracts that demonstrate solar project construction.*

### **Community Engagement | 12 Criteria | 80 Points**

Regional organizations can be an important and trusted source of information for residents, businesses, and solar installers. Providing clear, high-quality information, public education and inclusive engagement opportunities can help residents and businesses interested in solar energy make informed decisions. *Many of the criteria in the community engagement category can be verified on the organization's solar webpage by providing information about their solar energy goals and processes in one centralized location.*

### **Market Development | 10 Criteria | 145 Points**

Regional organizations can collaborate and partner with organizations to promote solar development within their region. Supporting a community solar program, promoting a solarize group-buy campaign, or partnering with a local financial institution can make solar energy more affordable and accessible for homes and businesses while improving business opportunities for solar installers. *Many of the criteria in the market development category can be verified by providing news articles about the organization's role in supporting solar development or by providing official documents that established policies or programs.*

## II. Criteria Overview

The SolSmart Regional Organization Designation Criteria is comprised of 50 criteria. Each of which is a specific action that regional organizations can implement to encourage solar energy development in their community. Each criterion has a corresponding point value ranging from 5 to 20. A detailed description with relevant templates, examples and resources to help you achieve each criterion is available in Section IV.

Criteria Identifier	Criteria Points	<u>Prerequisite Criteria</u>
PR-1	Req'd	Provide a document that demonstrates your regional organization's commitment to pursue SolSmart designation. (Required for Participation)
PR-2	Req'd	Post a solar landing page on the regional organization's website with information that may include the region's solar goals, educational materials and tools that promote solar, and resources for solar development (e.g., permitting checklist and information about instant/automatic permitting like SolarAPP+, solar application forms, inspection checklist, zoning regulations, etc.). (Required for Bronze)
PR-3	Req'd	Host regional training for planning and zoning staff from communities and counties in the region on best practices in planning and zoning for solar PV. Training must have occurred in the past two years. (Required for Bronze)
PR-4	Req'd	Host regional training on best practices for permitting solar PV and/or solar and storage systems. Training must have occurred in past two years. (Required for Silver)
PR-5	Req'd	Host regional training on best practices for inspecting solar PV and/or solar and storage systems. Training must have occurred in the past two years. (Required for Silver)
PR-6	Req'd	Collect and post member government energy targets for solar PV (e.g., # of installations, MW capacity, kWhs generated and/or procured) and progress against stated targets. To receive credit, regional organizations with 10 or fewer members must collect data from at least two communities. Regional organizations with more than 10 members must collect data from at least four communities.(Required for Gold)
PR-7	Req'd	Engage with regional organization members who are eligible for SolSmart designation and get them to submit a Solar Statement. To receive credit, regional organizations with 10 or fewer members must support two new communities with joining SolSmart. Regional organizations with more than 10 members must support at least four new communities. (Required for Platinum)
PR-8	Req'd	Develop and/or publicize a model solar zoning ordinance template that can be refined and adopted by member communities. (Required for Platinum)
PR-9	Req'd	Develop and/or publicize a model permitting and inspection process that can be refined and adopted by member communities. (Required for Platinum)
Criteria Identifier	Criteria Points	<u>Planning</u>
P-1	5	Review existing regional planning documents and identify new opportunities (not already included) to integrate solar PV and solar PV integrated with other technologies such as battery storage, or electric vehicle charging into planning goals.
P-2	5	Draft new or updated language and provide a timeline for the inclusion of specific solar PV goals, metrics, and strategies into existing and/or future regional plans.
P-3	10	Include specific solar PV goals, metrics, and strategies in the most current version of relevant regional plans (e.g., energy plan, climate plan, comprehensive plan).

P-4	5	Share solar PV progress towards achieving targets or metrics on the solar landing page.
P-5	10	Collaborate with local inspection departments to develop a solar PV inspection checklist for the region and post on the solar landing page developed as part of PR-2.
P-6	10	Develop an inventory of sites suitable for large-scale solar PV within the region.
P-7	10	Provide a training for local officials on ways large-scale solar strategies can be supported in the region, including regulatory authority and relevant state processes. Training must have occurred in the past two years.
<b>Criteria Identifier</b>	<b>Criteria Points</b>	<b><u>Operational Support</u></b>
OS-1	10	Discuss regional goals for solar PV, net metering, community solar, and/or interconnection processes with the local utility(ies) and explore areas for future collaboration. Compile summary and next steps in a memo.
OS-2	10	Coordinate with member communities or other local organizations to engage utilities on advancing solar policies such as utility procurement of solar PV, green tariffs, and/or interconnection process improvements.
OS-3	10	Convene local inspection departments to discuss innovative inspection practices (i.e. inspection appointments, virtual inspections), and if they are feasible in the region. Regional organization to summarize results of meeting.
OS-4	10	Work with at least one community in the region to demo an instant/automatic permitting process (e.g., SolarAPP+).
OS-5	20	Work with at least one community in the region to implement an instant/automatic permitting process (e.g., SolarAPP+).
OS-6	10	Conduct feasibility analysis for solar PV on public facilities and/or publicly controlled land. Compile summary and next steps in a memo.
OS-7	10	Procure solar energy for direct use by the regional organization or a regional organization-run program or service through an offsite physical PPA, virtual PPA, green tariff, or similar structure.
OS-8	10	Install solar PV for direct use by the regional organization or a regional organization-run program or service.
OS-9	20	Install solar PV integrated with other technologies such as battery storage, or electric vehicle charging on regional organization facilities.
OS-10	10	Aggregate and publicize solar PV and storage-related details on utility interconnection processes, utility-specific resources and regulations, and state/regional regulations and incentives for member-communities to leverage. Include and regularly update details on the organization's solar landing page.
OS-11	20	Support member communities in procuring solar energy or installing solar PV for direct use for local government facilities.
OS-12	10	Provide technical or financial support for the installation of solar PV on affordable housing, multifamily housing, community-based organizations, and/or resilience hubs.
<b>Criteria Identifier</b>	<b>Criteria Points</b>	<b><u>Community Engagement</u></b>
CE-1	5	Post online resources about solar installers and/or solar quote platforms for solar PV.
CE-2	5	Post online resources about residential and commercial solar PV financing options and incentives including an inventory of local incentives (e.g., permit fee waivers or rebates) or locally-enabled finance (e.g., a revolving loan fund) for solar PV provided by member communities.
CE-3	5	Post online resources about consumer protection and solar PV.

CE-4	5	Post an online summary of state policies related to a property owner's solar access and solar rights, including links to state-level policy.
CE-5	5	Post resources relevant to instant/automatic permitting (e.g., SolarAPP+) and how they can be adopted in your region.
CE-6	5	Post an online solar map for your region.
CE-7	5	Support a solar informational session and/or solar tour explaining solar PV opportunities and policies. Show that session/tour was made accessible to all member communities including disadvantaged communities. Session/Tour must have occurred within the last 2 years.
CE-8	10	Establish partnerships with local community-based organizations within your region on strategies for solar PV deployment and/or planned programs or initiatives.
CE-9	10	Partner with local colleges, workforce or economic development organizations/commissions, etc. to host renewable energy career fairs, networking events, or jobs trainings.
CE-10	5	Demonstrate regional organization support for local solar strategies through speeches, press releases, opinion articles, etc.
CE-11	10	Discuss solar PV goals and/or strategies for increasing solar PV development within an appropriate committee, commission, taskforce, and/or working group. (e.g., solar is a recurring agenda item during monthly sustainability commission meetings).
CE-12	10	Provide technical assistance and/or programs or processes to support solar PV development in disadvantaged communities.
<b>Criteria Identifier</b>	<b>Criteria Points</b>	<b><u>Market Development</u></b>
MD-1	20	Demonstrate activity in state regulatory and/or legislative proceedings regarding solar PV.
MD-2	20	Support a community-wide group purchase program (e.g., Solarize). Program must have occurred within the last two years.
MD-3	10	Define and implement a pathway specifically for low-to-moderate income (LMI) residents to participate in a community-wide group purchase program through program design and/or financing support options.
MD-4	20	Support a community solar program.
MD-5	10	Define and implement a pathway specifically for low-to-moderate income (LMI) residents to participate in a community solar program through program design and/or financing support options.
MD-6	20	Host a regional workshop focused on the topic of siting solar PV and procuring renewable energy.
MD-7	20	Provide an inventory of local incentives provided by member communities for solar PV to low-to-moderate income (LMI) households, disadvantaged communities, Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs), Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs), and/or non-profit organizations that provide community services.
MD-8	20	Partner with financial institutions and/or foundations to offer loans, rebates, grants, or other incentives for solar PV projects. (Financial institutions could include entities such as a local or regional bank, CDFI, or credit union).
MD-9	10	Develop a regional funding model or institution that directly funds or facilitates new solar PV adoption within the region.
MD-10	10	Develop a regional grant application process and/or team to apply for or sponsor competitive grants, maximizing the impact of state and federal funding opportunities for your members that alone would be ineligible.



Criteria Identifier	Criteria Points	Innovative Action
IA-1	Varies	The actions identified in the categories above represent many of the most common and impactful efforts organizations are taking to make going solar easier and more affordable for residents and businesses. However, we know that organizations across the country are developing innovative ways to promote and deploy solar energy. If your organization has taken action that was not captured in any of the criteria above, please share it with us.

### III. SolSmart Technical Assistance and Designation Process

Any organization, regardless of previous solar experience, is eligible for SolSmart designation. To request a call with a member of the SolSmart program, please [complete the contact form on SolSmart.org](https://www.solsmart.org/contact).

Once the organization decides to pursue SolSmart designation, they need to complete a Solar Statement and submit it to the SolSmart team. The Solar Statement demonstrates the organization's commitment to work with the SolSmart program and achieve designation. The organization will be connected with one of our technical assistance providers who will work to review regional goals and processes. This review helps determine how close the organization is to designation and any additional technical assistance to achieve designation. The organization will work with their technical assistance provider to develop a plan, identifying which criteria they will meet to achieve their desired designation level, and implement best practices in the region. Once they have completed the required actions, the local government can submit for designation.

To earn national recognition from the SolSmart Program, an organization must provide documentation of the actions it has implemented. This may include a combination of signed memos, web links, program materials, policy documents, etc. as appropriate. Section IV of this Program Guide provides a detailed description of each SolSmart criterion with resources to support implementation and guidance on documentation and verification that will be required by SolSmart.

Once the organization is ready for designation review, the submission is reviewed by the Designation Program Administrator within two weeks and the organization is notified of their designation by email.

Regional organizations are encouraged to celebrate and publicize their designations and to post information about SolSmart on their own websites. Many SolSmart designees have held events, shared photos and videos, and taken other actions to publicize their achievements. The designation email contains a Designation Toolkit with template press release, sample social media, and SolSmart Designation logos. SolSmart will also recognize organizations on the SolSmart website, on social media, and in the SolSmart newsletter.

#### Designation Pathways

There are three pathways to SolSmart designation:

Local governments that control permitting, inspection, planning, and zoning use the **Standard Pathway**.

Local governments that do not control permitting, inspection, planning, and/or zoning use the **Modified/County Pathway**. This pathway is appropriate for certain counties that do not have control over one or more of those processes.

Regional organizations such as regional councils or councils of government use the **Regional Organization Pathway (as summarized in this guide)**.

## IV. Designation Criteria Detail and Verification Guidance

The SolSmart criteria are based on specific best practices that organizations and community stakeholders can implement to encourage solar energy development in their community. This section provides a detailed description of each criterion, recommended verification for designation review, community examples, templates, and/or resources. A SolSmart Scorecard is available to help track progress. Please contact your Technical Assistance provider for more information.

The following provides an overview of the information that is provided for each SolSmart criterion:

Criterion Identifier	Criterion Points	Criterion Language	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criterion Objective and description.			
<b>Recommended Verification:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suggested options to verify the criterion.</li> </ul>			
<b>Community Examples:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples of how an individual community has completed the criterion.</li> </ul>			
<b>Templates:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Links to a template(s) that can help complete a criterion.</li> </ul>			
<b>Resources:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Links to useful websites, reports, guidebooks, etc. that have up-to-date information about the topics addressed by the criterion.</li> </ul>			

### Solar Statement

PR-1	Req'd	Provide a document that demonstrates your regional organization's commitment to pursue SolSmart designation. (Required for Participation)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Regional organizations interested in pursuing SolSmart designation must indicate their commitment to supporting solar development in their region by completing the PR-1 Solar Statement Prerequisite. The solar statement should be signed by a representative of the regional organization. It is preferred that the statement is signed by an organization executive, but it does not need to go through an official approval process. The solar statement demonstrates your organization's commitment to pursue SolSmart designation. If possible, please place the solar statement on your organization's letterhead. While the PR-1 is a commitment to the program, the best practices included in the template provided are goals to strive for and non-binding to the criteria you can pursue.</p> <p>The solar statement should address the items listed in the bullets below. The statement does not need to be more than one page in length.</p>			
<b>Recommended Verification:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a signed solar statement that includes:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A commitment to participate in the SolSmart designation process</li> <li>A statement of solar goals, areas of focus or community priorities (e.g., streamlining the permitting process or supporting a non-profit led solar initiative)</li> <li>A statement of support for solar development to be inclusive and equitable for all residents</li> <li>Past achievements or programs related to solar PV and/or renewable energy</li> <li>A commitment to tracking metrics related to solar PV and/or provide a benchmark of available solar metrics (e.g., the number of installed systems, capacity, growth in residential installations, etc.)</li> <li>A commitment of staff time and resources to improve the local market for solar PV</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			
<b>Community Examples:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">OKI Regional Council of Governments</a>   SolSmart Silver</li> </ul>			
<b>Templates:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SolSmart Solar Statement Template   SolSmart</li> </ul>			

## Prerequisite Criteria

<b>PR-2</b>	<b>Req'd</b>	<b>Post a solar landing page on the regional organization's website with information that may include the region's solar goals, educational materials and tools that promote solar, and resources for solar development (e.g. permitting checklist and information about instant/automatic permitting like SolarAPP+, solar application forms, inspection checklist, zoning regulations, etc.). (Required for Bronze)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>A solar landing page is a way to provide member communities, residents, businesses, and solar installers with important information about your region's solar energy policies, processes, goals, and metrics from one centralized location. It is also a way to educate local governments and community members about solar energy topics like financing options and consumer protection best practices. Information and resources posted should be made available in multiple languages, as appropriate for your community, and should be available to community members in print form if requested.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide a link to the solar landing page.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">South Central Regional Council of Governments, CT</a>   SolSmart Silver</li> <li>● <a href="#">North Central Texas Council of Governments</a>   SolSmart Bronze</li> <li>● <a href="#">Metropolitan (Met) Council, MN</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> <li>● <a href="#">Centre Region Council of Governments, PA</a>   SolSmart Silver</li> <li>● <a href="#">Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission</a>   SolSmart Bronze</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Templates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">SolSmart Solar Landing Page Template</a>   SolSmart</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Homeowner's Guide to Going Solar (View in Spanish)</a>   U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)</li> <li>● <a href="#">Residential Consumer Guide to Solar Power</a>   Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA)</li> </ul>			

<b>PR-3</b>	<b>Req'd</b>	<b>Host regional training for planning and zoning staff from communities and counties in the region on best practices in planning and zoning for solar PV. Training must have occurred in the past two years. (Required for Bronze)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Regular solar PV training is a best practice to ensure planning and zoning staff in your region are up-to-date on strategies for incorporating solar into plans, ordinances, and development regulations. Training staff in planning and zoning best practices for solar can help them to evaluate the options available for reducing barriers to solar and enable them to customize these best practices to their local context. Training can help staff develop clear, transparent, well-defined, and consistent planning and zoning regulations and processes that provide certainty for property owners and solar developers. Training should highlight and provide links to current model codes (IRC, IBC, and NEC). Organizations can host full or half-day workshops for staff within their region (either live or online) and provide or create resources designed to help staff keep up with advances in solar planning and zoning best practices.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide a signed memo with details about in-person permit training including name of training, name of trainer, attendees (name, title, department, affiliation), date and time, location, agenda, and presentation/slides.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Metropolitan Council</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Templates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">SolSmart Training Verification Memo</a>   SolSmart</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Best Practices in Solar Planning and Zoning</a>   SolSmart Webinar</li> <li>● <a href="#">Planning for Solar Energy</a>   American Planning Association (APA)</li> <li>● <a href="#">Planning, Zoning &amp; Development</a>   SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments</li> <li>● <a href="#">Solar@Scale Webinar Series, Session 5</a>   ICMA and APA</li> </ul>			

PR-4	Req'd	<b>Host regional training on best practices for permitting solar PV and/or solar and storage systems. Training must have occurred in past two years. (Required for Silver)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Regular solar PV training is a best practice to ensure permit technicians and plan reviewers in your region are up to date on new procedures, codes, and products within the solar industry. Trainings increase staff knowledge of solar energy systems and ensures they know the best procedures for permit application review and processing to ensure applications and supporting documents are compliant with building and electrical codes. Increased staff knowledge can improve processing efficiency, thereby reducing demands on staff time and resources. Training should include details on automatic permit approval technologies of residential rooftop solar PV systems (e.g., using SolarAPP+). Organizations can host full or half-day workshops for staff within their region (either live or online) and provide resources designed to help keep staff informed about advances in solar and storage technologies.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a signed memo with details about in-person permit training including name of training, name of trainer, attendees (name, title, department, affiliation), date and time, location, agenda, and presentation/slides.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Metropolitan Council</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> <li><a href="#">Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission</a>   SolSmart Bronze</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Templates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">SolSmart Training Verification Memo</a>   SolSmart</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Permitting Training Module 1   IREC Solar PV Structural Plan Review</a></li> <li><a href="#">Permitting Training Module 2   IREC Solar PV Electrical Plan Review</a></li> <li><a href="#">Permitting Training Module 3   IREC Solar PV Plan Review Test</a></li> <li><a href="#">Solar + Storage, A Guide for Local Governments</a>   SolSmart Webinar</li> </ul>			

PR-5	Req'd	<b>Host regional training on best practices for inspecting solar PV and/or solar and storage systems. Training must have occurred in the past two years. (Required for Silver)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Regular solar PV training, at least every two years, is a best practice to ensure field inspectors in your region are up to date on new procedures, codes, and products within the solar industry. Trainings increase staff knowledge of solar energy systems and ensures they know the best procedures for field inspections to ensure compliance with applicable state and local building and electrical codes. Increased staff knowledge can improve inspection efficiency, thereby reducing demands on staff time and resources. Training should include details on virtual, photo, or another innovative inspection practice with solar and/or solar plus storage. Organizations can host full or half-day workshops for staff within their region (either live or online) and provide resources designed to help keep staff informed about advances in solar and storage technologies.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a signed memo with details about in-person permit training including name of training, name of trainer, attendees (name, title, department, affiliation), date and time, location, agenda, and presentation/slides.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">North Central Texas Council of Governments</a>   SolSmart Bronze</li> <li><a href="#">Metropolitan Council</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Templates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">SolSmart Training Verification Memo</a>   SolSmart</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Solar PV Field Inspection Basics - Series</a>   Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC)</li> <li><a href="#">Solar + Storage, A Guide for Local Governments</a>   SolSmart Webinar</li> </ul>			

PR-6	Req'd	<b>Collect and post member government energy targets for solar PV (e.g., # of installations, MW capacity, kWhs generated and/or procured) and progress against stated targets. To receive credit, regional organizations with 10 or fewer members must collect data from at least two communities. Regional organizations with more than 10 members must collect data from at least four communities. (Required for Gold)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Regional organizations can provide additional capacity and support to local governments related to data collection and tracking. Key solar metrics such as the number of installations and total installed capacity can help</p>			

communicate progress towards local and state renewable energy goals. Other related metrics could include the percentage of regional energy provided by solar energy, installed capacity per capita and progress towards greenhouse gas emissions targets.

**Recommended Verification:**

- Provide a link to a webpage displaying solar PV metrics and date information was last updated

**Community Examples:**

- [North Central Texas Council of Governments](#) | SolSmart Bronze

PR-7	Req'd	<b>Engage with regional organization members who are eligible for SolSmart designation and get them to submit a Solar Statement. To receive credit, regional organizations with 10 or fewer members must support two new communities with joining SolSmart. Regional organizations with more than 10 members must support at least four new communities. (Required for Platinum)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Regional organizations can help to support local communities by introducing them to SolSmart and helping them seek designation themselves. Regional organizations can help facilitate designation by creating models and templates that can member communities can use as they adopt best practices and meet SolSmart criteria. Coordinated regional action can create even greater opportunities to support a strong solar market and drive down costs across a region.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed Solar Statements (Standard Pathway PR-1) from regional organization member communities.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Metropolitan (Met) Council, MN</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> <li>• <a href="#">Centre Region Council of Governments, PA</a>   SolSmart Silver</li> <li>• <a href="#">Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission</a>   SolSmart Bronze</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Templates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">SolSmart Solar Statement Template</a>   SolSmart</li> </ul>			

PR-8	Req'd	<b>Develop and/or publicize a model solar zoning ordinance template that can be refined and adopted by member communities. (Required for Platinum)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>A regional organization interested in enabling solar energy development should publish a locally relevant model zoning ordinance, by including basic solar information in the zoning ordinance such as a purpose, definitions, clarification on accessory use and primary use solar, and use standards. Zoning codes that contain no or little information about solar energy can complicate the process for homes and business that want to install a solar energy system. Including basic information about solar energy improves transparency of processes and clarity of development requirements and can enhance the growth of the local solar market in an organized and efficient manner.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link to model solar zoning ordinance on solar landing page.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission</a>   SolSmart Bronze</li> <li>• <a href="#">North Central Texas Council of Governments</a>   SolSmart Bronze</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Best Practice Guidance for Solar and Zoning – Accessory Use</a>   SolSmart</li> <li>• <a href="#">Model Zoning for the Regulation of Solar Energy Systems</a>   Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources</li> <li>• <a href="#">Renewable Energy Ordinance Framework: Solar PV</a>   Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Solar Model Ordinance</a>   Grow Solar Toolkit</li> <li>• <a href="#">Template Solar Energy Development Ordinance for North Carolina</a>   North Carolina Clean Energy Technology Center (NCCETC)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Best Practices in Zoning for Solar</a>   National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Planning, Zoning &amp; Development</a>   SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments</li> </ul>			

PR-9	Req'd	Develop and/or publicize a model permitting and inspection process that can be refined and adopted by member communities. (Required for Platinum)	□
Regional organizations can help to support the use of best practices in solar permitting and inspection by developing a model that can be easily implemented by member communities.			
<b>Recommended Verification:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Link to model on solar landing page.</li> </ul>			
<b>Community Examples:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission</a>   SolSmart Bronze</li> <li>● <a href="#">Region 1 Regional Planning Council Permitting Checklist</a>   Not designated</li> <li>● <a href="#">Region 1 Regional Planning Council Inspection Checklist</a>   Not designated</li> </ul>			
<b>Templates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">SolSmart Solar Permitting Checklist Template</a>   SolSmart</li> </ul>			
<b>Resources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Model Inspection Checklist for Residential Rooftop PV</a>   Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC)</li> <li>● <a href="#">Best Management Practices for Solar Installation Policy</a>   Mid America Regional Council (MARC)</li> <li>● Simplified Solar Permitting Process   SolSmart</li> <li>● Solar PV Construction: Codes, Permitting, and Inspection   SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments</li> </ul>			

## Planning

P-1	5	<b>Review existing regional planning documents and identify new opportunities (not already included) to integrate solar PV and solar PV integrated with other technologies such as battery storage, or electric vehicle charging into planning goals.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional organizations should consider opportunities to integrate solar PV and other technologies into other applicable planning processes. Organizations should review transportation, climate, land use, economic development, and other plans to consider how solar can be included to support all of the organization's planning efforts.			
<b>Recommended Verification:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signed memo summarizing opportunities and next steps</li> </ul>			
<b>Resources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Best Practices in Solar Planning and Zoning</a>   SolSmart Webinar</li> <li><a href="#">Planning for Solar Energy</a>   American Planning Association (APA)</li> <li><a href="#">Planning, Zoning &amp; Development</a>   SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments</li> </ul>			
P-2	5	<b>Draft new or updated language and provide a timeline for the inclusion of specific solar PV goals, metrics, and strategies into existing and/or future regional plans.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning documents provide the foundation for a community's vision for how and where it would like future development to occur. Development is governed largely by the components of the comprehensive plan and guided by the policies and strategies outlined in other functional plans such as a Climate Action Plan or Sustainability Plan. These planning documents should align to have solar energy goals, metrics, and strategies that promote solar development in an organized and efficient manner.			
<b>Recommended Verification:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide draft language of the proposed plan changes that relate to solar energy and a timeline for inclusion in future plans.</li> </ul>			
<b>Community Examples:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Chatham County, NC</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> <li><a href="#">South St. Paul, MN</a>   SolSmart Bronze</li> </ul>			
<b>Resources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Integrating Solar Energy into Local Plans</a>   American Planning Association (APA)</li> <li><a href="#">Planning for Solar Energy</a>   American Planning Association (APA)</li> <li><a href="#">Planning, Zoning &amp; Development</a>   SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments</li> </ul>			
P-3	10	<b>Include specific solar PV goals, metrics, and strategies in the most current version of relevant regional plans (e.g., energy plan, climate plan, comprehensive plan).</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional Organizations should utilize the work of P-2 and ensure that the goals, metrics and strategies they have drafted are fully integrated into the appropriate plans.			
<b>Recommended Verification:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a link to the relevant plans that incorporate solar PV goals, metrics, and/or strategies. Please indicate the relevant section(s).</li> </ul>			
<b>Community Examples:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">South Central Regional Council of Governments</a>   SolSmart Silver</li> <li><a href="#">Centre Region Council of Governments</a>   SolSmart Silver</li> <li><a href="#">Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments</a>   Not designated</li> </ul>			
<b>Resources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Integrating Solar Energy into Local Plans</a>   American Planning Association (APA)</li> <li><a href="#">Local Government Strategies for 100% Clean Energy</a>   SolSmart Webinar</li> <li><a href="#">Planning for Solar Energy</a>   American Planning Association (APA)</li> <li><a href="#">Planning, Zoning &amp; Development</a>   SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments</li> </ul>			



P-4	5	<b>Share solar PV progress towards achieving targets or metrics on the solar landing page.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Publicly reporting progress toward solar goals helps to create transparency and accountability. These metrics allow local governments to see the impacts of their policies and identify the need to adjust their strategies. To be meaningful, metrics must be updated annually at a minimum, but communities should strive for quarterly updates.			
<b>Recommended Verification:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a link to this information posted on the organization's website or solar landing page. Please specify the reporting period for which the reported metrics apply and date they were last updated.</li> </ul>			
P-5	10	<b>Collaborate with local inspection departments to develop a solar PV inspection checklist for the region and post on the solar landing page developed as part of PR-2.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional organizations can support member-communities and their inspection departments, facilitating development of a uniform region-wide inspection checklist tailored to the preferences of member-communities and adapted to suit the regional landscape. Including inspection staff in the development process and making this resource available via the regional organization's solar landing page can ensure all communities have access to a template inspection checklist regardless of their SolSmart status.			
<b>Recommended Verification:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a link to the inspection checklist and documentation that the resource has been shared with communities in the region, such as a newsletter, email, meeting minutes, etc.</li> </ul>			
<b>Community Examples:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission</a>   SolSmart Bronze</li> <li>• <a href="#">Michiana Area Council of Governments</a>   SolSmart Bronze</li> <li>• <a href="#">North Central Texas Council of Governments</a>   SolSmart Bronze</li> </ul>			
<b>Templates:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Field Inspection Checklist Template</a>   SolSmart</li> </ul>			
<b>Resources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Solar PV Systems: Job Aids for a Consistent Plan Review Process</a>   Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC)</li> <li>• <a href="#">California Solar Permitting Guidebook (4th Edition)</a> (pg. 22-24)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Simplifying the Solar Permitting Process: Residential Solar Permitting Best Practices Explained</a>   Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Solar PV Construction: Codes, Permitting, and Inspection</a>   SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments)</li> </ul>			
P-6	10	<b>Develop an inventory of sites suitable for large-scale solar PV within the region.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional organizations can proactively identify sites in the region that are favorable for solar PV projects. Identifying sites that have high solar potential and the best characteristics for large-scale solar development can reduce potential conflicts between solar and other land uses, enable member-communities to incorporate large-scale solar development into their future plans, and speed up the project development timeline. These inventories do not need to include every potential site, but may focus on a particular type or scale or project, a portion of the region, etc. as is most meaningful and valuable to the region.			
<b>Recommended Verification:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a link to the large-scale solar PV analysis inventory conducted for the region.</li> </ul>			
<b>Community Examples:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">North Central Texas Council of Governments</a>   SolSmart Bronze</li> </ul>			
<b>Resources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Solar Development on Public Facilities and Under-Utilized Land</a>   SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments</li> <li>• <a href="#">Decision Support Tools for Local Solar Planning and Development</a>   SolSmart Webinar</li> <li>• <a href="#">Solar Project Development Pathway- Site and Opportunity Assessment</a>   U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)</li> <li>• <a href="#">System Advisor Model (SAM)</a>   National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL)</li> </ul>			

P-7	10	<b>Provide a training for local officials on ways large-scale solar strategies can be supported in the region, including regulatory authority and relevant state processes. Training must have occurred in the past two years.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Large-scale solar projects are unique in many ways and require specific strategies to facilitate implementation. Local officials can benefit from training that helps explain the design and development process for large-scale solar projects, clarifies regulatory roles and responsibilities, and provides strategies that build support for large-scale solar projects by maximizing local benefits.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide a memo with details about in-person training including name of training, name of trainer, attendees (name, title, department, affiliation), date and time, location, agenda, and presentation/slides.</li> <li>● Provide a link to online training posted to a public streaming platform or the organization’s solar landing page.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Templates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">SolSmart Training Verification Memo</a>   SolSmart</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Solar@Scale Guidebook</a>   ICMA and APA</li> <li>● <a href="#">Solar@Scale Webinar Series</a>   ICMA and APA</li> </ul>			

## Operational Support

OS-1	10	<b>Discuss regional goals for solar PV, net metering, community solar, and/or interconnection processes with the local utility(ies) and explore areas for future collaboration. Compile summary and next steps in a memo.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Regional organizations can leverage their relationship with electric utilities to encourage increased support for, and development of, solar energy. Regional organizations and utilities can partner to provide community solar programs, solar incentives, and help improve the solar interconnection process. Utilities can also help regional organizations meet their renewable energy goals by procuring large amount of solar energy. Please note that conversations cannot include docketed proceedings that the utility is currently engaged in with the state regulatory commission.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signed memo summarizing include number and dates of meetings, parties present, general agendas, and outcomes from the meetings.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Missoula, MT</a>   SolSmart Silver</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Engagement Guidance</a>   American Cities Climate Challenge Renewables Accelerator</li> <li><a href="#">Making Solar &amp; Electrification Policies Mutually Beneficial</a>   SolSmart Webinar</li> <li><a href="#">Procurement Guidance</a>   American Cities Climate Challenge Renewables Accelerator</li> <li><a href="#">Solar &amp; Electrification, A Beneficial Partnership</a>   SolSmart Issue Brief</li> <li><a href="#">Utilizing City-Utility Partnership Agreements to Achieve Climate and Energy Goals</a>   World Resources Institute (WRI)</li> </ul>			
OS-2	10	<b>Coordinate with member communities or other local organizations to engage utilities on advancing solar policies such as utility procurement of solar PV, green tariffs, and/or interconnection process improvements.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Organizations can find strength in numbers as they advance ambitious energy transformation goals. Collaborating with their members and/or regional organizations allows resources, expertise, and staff to be pooled together which can enhance efforts to work with utilities. Networks of communities and utilities can provide opportunities to share best practices and common strategies through peer-to-peer learning. They can also help build coalitions and advocate for state policy.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides details about your organization's participation in coordinated efforts between local governments and/or regional organizations to engage utilities with the goal of advancing solar initiatives.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Salt Lake City, UT</a>   SolSmart Bronze</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Engagement Guidance</a>   American Cities Climate Challenge Renewables Accelerator</li> <li><a href="#">Engagement Tracker</a>   American Cities Climate Challenge Renewables Accelerator</li> <li><a href="#">PJM Cities &amp; Communities Coalition</a>   World Resources Institute (WRI)</li> <li><a href="#">Procurement Guidance</a>   American Cities Climate Challenge Renewables Accelerator</li> <li><a href="#">Utilizing City-Utility Partnership Agreements to Achieve Climate and Energy Goals</a>   World Resources Institute (WRI)</li> <li><a href="#">Municipal Franchise Agreements and Clean Energy Objectives</a>   National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL)</li> </ul>			
OS-3	10	<b>Convene local inspection departments to discuss innovative inspection practices (i.e., inspection appointments, virtual inspections), and if they are feasible in the region. Regional organization to summarize results of meeting.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Ensuring an effective and expedient inspection process can reduce project costs. Host a meeting of member communities to discuss implementing virtual, photo, or another innovative inspection practice with solar and/or solar plus storage. Discuss what types of projects (e.g., residential, installations under a certain size, etc.) would qualify for virtual or photo inspections and available resources.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a signed memo with details about the innovative inspection meeting including names of organizer/presenters, attendees (name, title, department, community), date and time, location, agenda, and presentation/slides.</li> </ul>			

<b>Community Examples:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Tampa, FL</a>   SolSmart Bronze</li> <li>• <a href="#">Pima County, AZ</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> <li>• <a href="#">County of Los Angeles</a>   Not designated</li> </ul>	

<b>Resources:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Construction Photo Resource</a>   NY- Sun</li> <li>• <a href="#">Inspection Guide for PV Systems For One- and Two- Family Dwellings</a>   County of Los Angeles</li> </ul>	

<b>OS-4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Work with at least one community in the region to demo an instant/automatic permitting process (e.g., SolarAPP+).</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Most residential solar systems are simple and standardized, but the high volume of applications can be time consuming for local permitting departments. Online automated platforms (e.g., SolarAPP+) offer a convenient and efficient way to manage solar permitting. These platforms can help local governments to stay up to date with relevant codes, catch errors, improve communication with applicants, accelerate approval for standardized PV systems, and improve record keeping. The regional organization can help identify communities that might be interested in adopting instant/automatic permitting and help them learn more.

<b>Recommended Verification:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed memo that includes date, attendees, presenter, summary of discussion topics and next steps</li> </ul>

<b>Community Examples:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Pima County, AZ</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> <li>• <a href="#">Sacramento County, CA</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> <li>• <a href="#">Sonoma County, CA</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> </ul>	

<b>Templates:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">SolSmart Training Verification Memo</a>   SolSmart</li> </ul>	

<b>Resources:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Instant Permitting Example</a>   State of California, California Energy Commission</li> <li>• <a href="#">Register for SolarAPP+</a>   National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)</li> <li>• <a href="#">SolarAPP+ Communities</a>   National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)</li> <li>• <a href="#">SolarAPP+ Performance Case Studies</a>   National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)</li> </ul>	

<b>OS-5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Work with at least one community in the region to implement an instant/automatic permitting process (e.g., SolarAPP+).</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Communities that move forward with the implementation of an instant-automatic permitting processes may benefit from the support of a regional organization. Regional organizations help garner stakeholder support for adopting instant permitting, facilitate onboarding calls between communities and the software team, help answer questions and overcome any challenges that arise.

<b>Recommended Verification:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed memo describing how the regional organization provided support during the implementation of instant/automatic permitting</li> </ul>

<b>Community Examples:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Pima County, AZ</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> <li>• <a href="#">Sacramento County, CA</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> <li>• <a href="#">Sonoma County, CA</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> </ul>	

<b>Resources:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">SolarAPP+ Benefits</a> National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Register for SolarAPP+</a>   National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)</li> <li>• <a href="#">SolarAPP+ Communities</a>   National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)</li> <li>• <a href="#">SolarAPP+ Performance Case Studies</a>   National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)</li> </ul>	

<b>OS-6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Conduct feasibility analysis for solar PV on public facilities and/or publicly controlled land. Compile summary and next steps in a memo.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Regional organizations can lead by example and install solar PV on their facilities and/or land to achieve clean energy goals and generate electricity cost savings. The first step is conducting a feasibility analysis to discover which rooftops or grounds have the highest solar potential and best characteristic for a solar installation. A feasibility analysis can be done using outside consultants, or with tools provided by federal agencies, such as the Department of Energy (DOE). An RFP can then be issued for the most favorable sites. An organization that

receives OS-8 or OS-9 may also qualify for OS-6 if they completed a feasibility analysis as part of the project development process.

**Recommended Verification:**

- Provide a link to the feasibility analysis or details about the feasibility analysis that was conducted – who conducted, what were the sites, when was it conducted, what were the recommendations and next steps.

**Community Examples:**

- [Asheville, NC](#) | SolSmart Gold
- [Mountain Iron, MN](#) | SolSmart Bronze

**Resources:**

- [Decision Support Tools for Local Solar Planning & Development](#) | SolSmart Webinar
- [Solar Project Development Pathway - Site and Opportunity Assessment](#) | Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- [Solar Development on Public Facilities and Under-utilized Land](#) | SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments
- [System Advisor Model \(SAM\)](#) | National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)

<b>OS-7</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Procure solar energy for direct use by the regional organization or a regional organization-run program or service through an offsite physical PPA, virtual PPA, green tariff, or similar structure.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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To meet climate and energy goals, regional organizations can procure a large amount of solar energy through an appropriate structure, depending on the types of contracts allowed by state and utility regulations.

**Recommended Verification:**

- Provide a document such as a news article, contract, press release, or similar official document containing the details how the organization is procuring solar energy.

**Community Examples:**

- [Centre Region Council of Governments](#) | SolSmart Silver
- [Denton, TX](#) | SolSmart Gold

**Resources:**

- [How Cities Benefit from Power Purchase Agreements](#) | Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES)
- [How Local Governments Can Buy Renewable Energy & Support Market Development](#) | SolSmart Webinar
- [Local Government Strategies for 100% Clean Energy](#) | SolSmart Webinar
- [Procurement Guidance](#) | American Cities Climate Challenge Renewables Accelerator
- [Municipal Solar Procurement](#) | SolSmart Webinar
- [Solar Power Purchase Agreements: A Toolkit for Local Governments](#) | Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC)

<b>OS-8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Install solar PV for direct use by the regional organization or a regional organization-run program or service.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Regional organizations can lead by example and install solar on their facilities and/or land to achieve clean energy goals. Solar installations can generate revenue, deliver electricity cost savings, and serve as an educational tool for organization and community members. Regional organizations are encouraged to install solar at highly visible locations to maximize the educational value.

**Recommended Verification:**

- Provide news articles, a press release announcing the commissioned system, or webpage that summarizes the details of the installation(s) including total number of systems, size, location, visibility and photos.

**Community Examples:**

- [Johnson County, IA](#) | SolSmart Gold
- [New York City, NY](#) | SolSmart Gold

**Resources:**

- [Procurement Guidance](#) | American Cities Climate Challenge Renewables Accelerator
- [Solar Decision Support and Resources for Local Governments](#) | National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)
- [Solar Development on Public Facilities and Under-utilized Land](#) | SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments
- [Solar Power Purchase Agreements: A Toolkit for Local Governments](#) | Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC)

<b>OS-9</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Install solar PV integrated with other technologies such as battery storage, or electric vehicle charging on regional organization facilities.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Solar can provide unique benefits when paired with other distributed energy technologies. Co-locating solar with other technologies can improve resilience, provide demand-charge reductions, and charging electric vehicles with a renewable source of energy.			
<b>Recommended Verification:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a news article, a press release announcing the commissioned system, or webpage that summarizes the details of the solar installation(s) plus storage including total number of systems, size, location, and photos.</li> </ul>			
<b>Community Examples:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Duluth, MN</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> <li>• <a href="#">Montgomery County, MD</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> </ul>			
<b>Resources:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Best Practices for Solar &amp; Electric Bus Charging at Transit Agencies</a>   SolSmart Webinar</li> <li>• <a href="#">REopt: Renewable Energy Integration &amp; Optimization</a>   National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Solar and Electric Vehicles: A Guide for Local Governments</a>   SolSmart</li> <li>• <a href="#">Solar &amp; Electric Vehicle Best Practices for Local Governments</a>   SolSmart Webinar</li> <li>• <a href="#">Solar and Energy Storage for Resiliency (Solar Resilient)</a>   San Francisco Department of the Environment</li> <li>• <a href="#">Solar and Resiliency: Integrative Financing Strategies for SolSmart Communities</a>   SolSmart Issue Brief</li> <li>• <a href="#">Resiliency: Solar + Storage</a>   SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments</li> </ul>			

<b>OS-10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Aggregate and publicize solar PV and storage-related details on utility interconnection processes, utility-specific resources and regulations, and state/regional regulations and incentives for member-communities to leverage. Include and regularly update details on the organization's solar landing page.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional organizations can play a valuable role in researching and compiling information about policies, regulations, and incentives from utility and state entities related to solar PV and storage. Regional organizations can help make this information readily available to member communities and ensure the information is kept current.			
<b>Recommended Verification:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a link to relevant information on the solar landing page.</li> </ul>			

<b>OS-11</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Support member communities in procuring solar energy or installing solar PV for direct use for local government facilities.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional organizations can help member-communities lead by example and install solar on their facilities and/or land to achieve clean energy goals. Solar installations can generate revenue for local governments, deliver electricity cost savings, and serve as an educational tool for community members. If member-communities have limited feasible sites or land to install solar PV, procuring solar energy for their operations through an offsite PPA, virtual PPA, green tariff, or similar structure is also a viable option. Regional organizations can provide member communities with resources and information, technical support, help with grant applications, support to circulate RFPs and review proposals, etc.			
<b>Recommended Verification:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide news article or press release announcing the commissioned system (or procurement), with a summary of the installation(s) including total number of systems, size, location, and photos, and how the regional organization aided the member-community's procurement of solar energy.</li> </ul>			
<b>Community Examples:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission</a>   SolSmart Silver</li> <li>• <a href="#">Johnson County, IA</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> </ul>			
<b>Resources:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Procurement Guidance</a>   American Cities Climate Challenge Renewables Accelerator</li> <li>• <a href="#">Solar Decision Support and Resources for Local Governments</a>   National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Solar Development on Public Facilities and Under-utilized Land</a>   SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments</li> <li>• <a href="#">Solar Power Purchase Agreements: A Toolkit for Local Governments</a>   Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC)</li> </ul>			

OS-12	10	<b>Provide technical or financial support for the installation of solar PV on affordable housing, multifamily housing, community-based organizations, and/or resilience hubs.</b>	□
<p>Regional organizations can partner with community-serving organizations, housing developers and managers of resilience hubs to support the implementation of solar. Regional organizations may be able to offer technical support if they have relevant expertise for example in project development, energy or project finance. In other instances, regional organizations may be able to offer direct financial support to these projects.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide links and/or a signed memo outlining the support provided.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Hillsborough County</a>   Not designated</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Process Guide for City-Community Collaboration</a>   Greenlink Analytics</li> <li>● <a href="#">The Inflation Reduction Act: What does it mean for Affordable Housing (webinar)</a>   Enterprise Community Partners</li> </ul>			

## Community Engagement

<b>CE-1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Post online resources about solar installers and/or solar quote platforms for solar PV.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>More solar companies operating in your region means residents and businesses are faced with more choices as they consider who to select for their solar project. Providing relevant local information on active solar installers can help community members make the best choice given their circumstances. Post information to the organization's solar landing page. Information and resources posted should be made available in multiple languages as appropriate for your community. In addition, information and resources should be available to community members in print form if requested.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a link to the relevant information on the solar landing page.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Metropolitan (Met) Council, MN</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> <li>• <a href="#">Centre Region Council of Governments</a>, PA   SolSmart Gold</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Templates:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">SolSmart Solar Landing Page Template</a>   SolSmart</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Board Certified Professionals Directory</a>   North American Board Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP)</li> <li>• <a href="#">EnergySage</a>   EnergySage</li> <li>• <a href="#">Pickmysolar</a>   Pick My Solar</li> <li>• <a href="#">Solar Buyer's Markets: Unlocking Lower Photovoltaic and Battery Prices on Online Quote Platforms</a>   National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)</li> </ul>			
<b>CE-2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Post online resources about residential and commercial solar PV financing options and incentives including an inventory of local incentives (e.g., permit fee waivers or rebates) or locally enabled finance (e.g., a revolving loan fund) for solar PV provided by member communities.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Many different financing options are available for residential and commercial solar PV. Regional organizations can play an important role in providing access to information about available options. Post information to the organization's solar landing page. Information and resources posted should be made available in multiple languages as appropriate for your community. In addition, information and resources should be available to community members in print form if requested.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a link to the organization's solar landing page.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Metropolitan (Met) Council, MN</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> <li>• <a href="#">Wood County, WI</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">A Homeowner's Guide to Solar Financing: Leases, Loans and PPAs</a>   Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency (DSIRE)</a>   North Carolina Clean Energy Technology Center (NCCETC)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Financing your solar panel system</a>   EnergySage</li> <li>• <a href="#">Homeowner's Guide to the Federal Tax Credit for Solar Photovoltaics (View in Spanish)</a>   U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)</li> </ul>			
<b>CE-3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Post online resources about consumer protection and solar PV.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Solar energy can be a new and complex topic for community members. Regional organizations can provide online guides and resources to help community members have a clear understanding of solar PV, allowing them to make informed decisions. Post information to the organization's solar landing page. Information and resources posted should be made available in multiple languages as appropriate for your community. In addition, information and resources should be available to community members in print form if requested.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a link to the relevant information on the solar landing page.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Northern Virginia Regional Commission</a>, VA   SolSmart Bronze</li> </ul>			



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Metropolitan (Met) Council, MN</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> </ul>
<b>Resources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Consumer Solar Checklist</a>   Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC)</li> <li>• <a href="#">EnergySage</a>   EnergySage</li> <li>• <a href="#">Residential Issues and Existing Regulatory Framework</a>   SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments</li> <li>• <a href="#">Solar Customer Resource Portal</a>   Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Solar Owner's Manual (View in Spanish)</a>   Solar United Neighbors (SUN)</li> </ul>

<b>CE-4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Post an online summary of state policies related to a property owner's solar access and solar rights, including links to state-level policy.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Property owners are often unaware that state policy could impact their property's solar rights. Solar rights and solar access are terms which describe the ability of property owners to utilize sunlight on their property. Each state has its own unique policy and enforcement regime. Post information to the organization's solar landing page. Information and resources posted should be made available in multiple languages as appropriate for your community. In addition, information and resources should be available to community members in print form if requested.</p>			
<b>Recommended Verification:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a link to the summary on the solar landing page.</li> </ul>			
<b>Community Examples:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Michiana Area Council of Governments</a>   SolSmart Bronze</li> <li>• <a href="#">Torrance, CA</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> <li>• <a href="#">Wilmette, IL</a>   SolSmart Silver</li> </ul>			
<b>Resources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Homeowners Associations and Solar Access</a>   Solar United Neighbors</li> <li>• <a href="#">Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency (DSIRE)</a>   North Carolina Clean Energy Technology Center (NCCETC)</li> </ul>			

<b>CE-5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Post resources relevant to instant/automatic permitting (e.g., SolarAPP+) and how they can be adopted in your region.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Regional organizations can help their member communities to learn about and adopt instant/automatic permitting, including SolarAPP+. The solar landing page can provide resources and help communities learn more about how these platforms can help local governments to stay up to date with relevant codes, catch errors, improve communication with applicants, accelerate approval for standardized PV systems, and improve record keeping.</p>			
<b>Recommended Verification:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a link to the relevant information on the solar landing page.</li> </ul>			
<b>Resources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Register for SolarAPP+</a>   National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)</li> <li>• <a href="#">SolarAPP+ Communities</a>   National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)</li> <li>• <a href="#">SolarAPP+ Performance Case Studies</a>   National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)</li> </ul>			

<b>CE-6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Post an online solar map for your region.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Solar maps can be a helpful and visual way to communicate solar potential to community members. Solar maps can be customized depending on the goals and needs of the community. For example, solar maps can provide community members with an estimate of the solar potential of their rooftop, they can be used the location of solar installations within a community (which may help residents understand the extent of solar projects happening in different parts of the community), or they may be used to communicate the potential for different solar installations (i.e., residential, commercial, large-scale, community solar, etc).</p>			
<b>Recommended Verification:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a link to the solar map for your region.</li> </ul>			
<b>Community Examples:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Centre Region Council of Governments</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> </ul>			
<b>Resources:</b>			

- [Solar Indiana Solar Map](#) | Solar Indiana Renewable Energy Network (SIREN)
- [NY Solar Map](#) | Sustainable CUNY Smart Distributed Generation Hub
- [Project Sunroof](#) | Google

<b>CE-7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Support a solar informational session and/or solar tour explaining solar PV opportunities and policies. Show that session/tour was made accessible to all member communities including disadvantaged communities. Session/Tour must have occurred within the last 2 years.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Engaged and informed members can encourage solar market growth and increase the likelihood that local homes and businesses will pursue solar installations. Solar informational sessions and solar tours are ways to educate community leaders and the general public about the solar energy and the processes involved with an installation. Regional organizations should ensure that sessions are inclusive and accessible to a diverse audience.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a link(s) to details about the solar informational session or tour such as an agenda, date, time, and location and summarize efforts to make sessions inclusive and accessible.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Lower Merion, PA</a>   SolSmart Bronze</li> <li>• <a href="#">Sarasota County, FL</a>   SolSmart Silver</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Solar Tour Resources</a>   National Solar Tour</li> </ul>			

<b>CE-8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Establish partnerships with local community-based organizations within your region on strategies for solar PV deployment and/or planned programs or initiatives.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Partnering with organizations that have strong ties with disadvantaged communities is an important way to ensure that solar projects and programs, as well as outreach efforts, are designed to meet the needs of those communities. For example, a regional organization, local government, a CBO, and a local solar installer could come together to implement a solarize campaign customized to LMI households or to develop a targeted outreach strategy related to a community solar project. The partnership may have a scope that is broader than solar (for example, partnering on a range of climate-related goals or economic development initiatives) as long as it clearly includes solar deployment strategies.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed memo summarizing the names of partner organizations, scope of the partnership, outcomes (or intended outcomes) and next steps for the partnership.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Integrating Equity Into City Clean Energy Initiatives</a>   American Cities Climate Challenge Renewables Accelerator</li> <li>• <a href="#">Solar with Justice</a>   Clean Energy States Alliance</li> <li>• <a href="#">From Community Engagement to Ownership</a>   USDN</li> <li>• <a href="#">Process Guide for City-Community Collaboration</a>   Greenlink Analytics</li> <li>• <a href="#">Shared Accountability Guide and Framework</a>   100% Accountability Cohort</li> <li>• <a href="#">Justice40 Screening Tool</a>   Justice40 Initiative</li> <li>• <a href="#">Clean Energy for Low Income Communities Accelerator Toolkit</a>   U.S. Department of Energy Better Buildings</li> </ul>			

<b>CE-9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Partner with local colleges, workforce or economic development organizations/commissions, etc. to host renewable energy career fairs, networking events, or jobs trainings.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>As local solar markets grow, regional organizations can promote solar job opportunities with community colleges and workforce development organizations to ensure a well-trained, local workforce. The organization should provide technical and monetary assistance, provide connections and information. The event that results as an outcome from this partnership should be publicly co-hosted and marketed by the regional organization.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a link(s) to details about the fair, networking event or job training and an agenda, date, time, and location.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p>			

- [Solar Career Map](#) | Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC)
- [Solar Ready Vets](#) | Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC)
- [Solar Workforce Development Pilot](#) | St. Louis, MO
- [Workforce Development](#) | Grid Alternatives

<b>CE-10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Demonstrate regional organization support for local solar strategies through speeches, press releases, opinion articles, etc.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Regional organizations can encourage solar market growth by highlighting solar energy goals, initiatives, and success stories through various communications strategies. Share the links and/or videos of communications efforts on the organization’s solar landing page.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a link to the relevant information on the solar landing page.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Fayetteville, AR</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> <li>• <a href="#">Louisville, KY</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Stakeholder Engagement</a>   SolSmart’s Toolkit for Local Governments</li> </ul>			

<b>CE-11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Discuss solar PV goals and/or strategies for increasing solar PV development within an appropriate committee, commission, taskforce, and/or working group. (e.g., solar is a recurring agenda item during monthly sustainability commission meetings).</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>An Environmental Advisory Council, Sustainability Committees, or Climate Action Taskforce is a great way to keep members and key stakeholders actively engaged in regional energy policy and development. These groups can assist in the development of solar energy goals and strategies, lead community-based solar initiatives, and provide communication and outreach support to inform members about solar initiatives and plans.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide meeting minutes (including a list of follow-up action items) or materials prepared for the meeting (e.g., handouts and slides) from within the past year and provide documentation of the regularly scheduled frequency of these meetings.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Branford, CT</a>   SolSmart Bronze</li> <li>• <a href="#">Fairfield, CT</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Stakeholder Engagement</a>   SolSmart’s Toolkit for Local Governments</li> <li>• <a href="#">Solar and Resiliency: Integrative Financing Strategies for SolSmart Communities</a>   SolSmart Issue Brief</li> <li>• <a href="#">Solar Power in Your Community</a>   Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy</li> </ul>			

<b>CE-12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Provide technical assistance and/or programs or processes to support solar PV development in disadvantaged communities.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Regional organizations can offer targeted assistance to support solar PV development in disadvantaged communities. Many of the strategies previously described including consumer education and engagement, mapping, feasibility assessment, etc. can be scaled down and used to help identify and advance projects in neighborhoods or communities that have been historically underserved.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed memo summarizing the technical assistance program or process, the community served, and a summary of outcomes.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Integrating Equity into City Clean Energy Initiatives</a>   American Cities Climate Challenge Renewables Accelerator</li> <li>• <a href="#">Solar with Justice</a>   Clean Energy States Alliance</li> <li>• <a href="#">From Community Engagement to Ownership</a>   Urban Sustainability Director’s Network (USDN)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Process Guide for City-Community Collaboration</a>   Greenlink Analytics</li> <li>• <a href="#">Justice40 Screening Tool</a>   Justice40 Initiative</li> <li>• <a href="#">Clean Energy for Low Income Communities Accelerator Toolkit</a>   Better Buildings</li> </ul>			

## Market Development

MD-1	20	<b>Demonstrate activity in state regulatory and/or legislative proceedings regarding solar PV.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Regional organizations can provide an important voice into the development of state-level solar energy policy, strategies, and incentives. Staff can track policy developments actively and develop appropriate strategies to interact with state regulators and legislators. Interactions with ISO/RTO are included in this criterion.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide a link to public comments on solar energy or related proceeding; or</li> <li>● Provide agenda, minutes and/or recording of meetings in which the regional organization participated.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Ann Arbor, MI</a>   SolSmart Silver</li> <li>● <a href="#">Santa Fe, NM</a> (Resolution 2018-71)   SolSmart Bronze</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Engagement Guidance</a>   American Cities Climate Challenge Renewables Accelerator</li> <li>● <a href="#">Engagement Tracker</a>   American Cities Climate Challenge Renewables Accelerator</li> <li>● <a href="#">The Federal and State Context: Policies Affecting Solar Energy Development</a>   SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments</li> </ul>			
MD-2	20	<b>Support a community-wide group purchase program (e.g., Solarize). Program must have occurred within the last 2 years.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Regional organizations can support or host community group purchase programs for solar energy. Bulk purchasing can reduce the costs of solar installations for community members. These limited time-offers have had consistent success in providing discounts of up to 20% of installed costs for residential systems. To be eligible for MD-2, the regional organization must be an official partner and/or provide tangible support (staff time, resources, etc.) to the group purchase program.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide a link to a website where the Solarize campaign has been publicly announced.</li> <li>● Provide details about the status of an ongoing solarize campaign or final metrics of a completed solarize campaign.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">La Crosse County, WI</a>   SolSmart Bronze</li> <li>● <a href="#">Montgomery County, MD</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Procurement Guidance- Solarize</a>   American Cities Climate Challenge</li> <li>● <a href="#">How to Development a Solarize Campaign</a>   SolSmart Webinar</li> <li>● <a href="#">Market Development and Finance</a>   SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments</li> <li>● <a href="#">Solarize Your Community</a>   New York State Energy and Research Development Authority (NYSERDA)</li> <li>● <a href="#">Solarize Mass</a>   Massachusetts Clean Energy Center</li> </ul>			
MD-3	10	<b>Define and implement a pathway specifically for low-to-moderate income (LMI) residents to participate in a community-wide group purchase program through program design and/or financing support options.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>It can be particularly difficult for low-to-moderate income (LMI) households to participate in solar purchasing programs. These programs may require a minimum credit score, an upfront deposit, or have contract terms that present barriers for some residents. Regional organizations can help to identify these barriers and help overcome them, for example by providing incentives for income-qualified participants.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide signed memo that explains the forms of financing support or program design elements that support LMI residents in solar PV group purchase program.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Durham, NC</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> <li>● <a href="#">Philadelphia, PA</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Procurement Guidance- Solarize</a>   American Cities Climate Challenge</li> <li>● <a href="#">Narrowing the Equity Gap through Solarize</a>   Rocky Mountain Institute</li> <li>● <a href="#">How to Development a Solarize Campaign</a>   SolSmart Webinar</li> </ul>			

- [Market Development and Finance](#) | SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments

<b>MD-4</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Support a community solar program.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Community solar offers residents and businesses an opportunity to own or lease a portion of a solar project in exchange for economic benefits proportional to their share. These economic benefits are commonly delivered in the form of electricity bill credits. For renters, and homes or business that are not suitable sites for solar, community solar programs allow consumers to access solar without installing panels on their homes or business. Community solar can be provided by utilities, a third party, or a non-profit. Supporting actions include making community solar information available on the regional organization website/solar landing page, map of community solar projects, how to subscribe and what a subscription entails. To be eligible for MD-4, the regional organization must be an official partner and/or provide tangible support (staff time, resources, etc.) to the community solar program.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a link to information about the community solar program, including any outreach materials and details about program design.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Austin, TX</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> <li>• <a href="#">Fort Collins, CO</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Community Solar</a>   SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments</li> <li>• <a href="#">National Community Solar Partnership Technical Expertise and Capacity Building</a>   U.S. Department of Energy National Community Solar Partnership</li> <li>• <a href="#">Expanding Solar Participation through Community Solar</a>   SolSmart Issue Brief</li> <li>• <a href="#">Expanding Solar Participation through Community Solar</a>   SolSmart Webinar</li> <li>• <a href="#">Procurement Guidance</a>   American Cities Climate Challenge Renewables Accelerator</li> <li>• <a href="#">Community Solar</a>   National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Community Solar Resources</a>   U.S. Department of Energy</li> </ul>			

<b>MD-5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Define and implement a pathway specifically for low-to-moderate income (LMI) residents to participate in a community solar program through program design and/or financing support options.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>It can be particularly difficult for low-to-moderate income (LMI) households to participate in solar purchasing programs. These programs may require a minimum credit score, an upfront deposit, or have contract terms that present barriers for some residents. Regional organizations can help to identify these barriers and create strategies to overcome them, by providing incentives for income-qualified participants.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link to information on solar landing page or provide signed memo summarizing the forms of financing support or program design elements that support LMI residents in solar PV group purchase program.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Denver, CO</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> <li>• <a href="#">Washington, DC</a>   SolSmart Gold</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Community Solar</a>   SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments</li> <li>• <a href="#">Design and Implementation of Community Solar Programs for Low- and Moderate-Income Customers</a>   National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Procurement Guidance</a>   American Cities Climate Challenge Renewables Accelerator</li> <li>• <a href="#">Community Solar +</a>   Rocky Mountain Institute</li> <li>• <a href="#">National Community Solar Partnership Technical Expertise and Capacity Building</a>   U.S. Department of Energy National Community Solar Partnership</li> <li>• <a href="#">Equitable Access to Community Solar: Program Design and Subscription Considerations</a>   National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)</li> </ul>			

<b>MD-6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Host a regional workshop focused on the topic of siting solar PV and procuring renewable energy.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Regional organizations can play an important role in convening and training member communities. Siting solar PV and strategies for procuring renewable energy are both important topics that regional organizations can get involved in. These topics are often best explored at a regional scale where trainings can be adapted to reflect state-specific policies, land use concerns, procurement policies, etc.</p>			

<b>Recommended Verification:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a memo with details about in-person permit training including name of training, name of trainer, attendees (name, title, department), date and time, location, agenda, and presentation/slides.</li> <li>• Provide a link to online training posted to a public streaming platform or the organization's solar landing page.</li> </ul>	
<b>Templates:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">SolSmart Training Verification Memo</a>   SolSmart</li> </ul>	
<b>Resources:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Procurement Guidance</a>   American Cities Climate Challenge Renewables Accelerator</li> <li>• <a href="#">Municipal Solar Procurement</a>   SolSmart Webinar</li> <li>• <a href="#">Decision Support Tools for Local Solar Planning &amp; Development</a>   SolSmart Webinar</li> <li>• <a href="#">Solar Project Development Pathway - Site and Opportunity Assessment</a>   Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Solar Development on Public Facilities and Under-utilized Land</a>   SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments</li> </ul>	

<b>MD-7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Provide an inventory of local incentives provided by member communities for solar PV to low-to-moderate income (LMI) households, disadvantaged communities, Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs), Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs), and/or non-profit organizations that provide community services.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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There are often a variety of different incentives available to LMI households, DBEs, and non-profit organizations. It can be difficult for a home or business owner to navigate these different programs and understand what is applicable to them. Regional organizations can help create an organized inventory of the incentive programs and help improve access to these programs.

<b>Recommended Verification:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a link to the relevant information on the organization's solar landing page.</li> </ul>	
<b>Resources:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Market Development and Finance</a>   SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments</li> <li>• <a href="#">Projects &amp; Programs in Low-to-Moderate Income Communities</a>   SolSmart Webinar</li> <li>• <a href="#">Resources to Support Initiatives for Low-to-Moderate Income Communities</a>   SolSmart Webinar</li> <li>• <a href="#">Unlocking Solar for Low- and Moderate-Income Residents: A Matrix of Financing Options by Resident, Provider, and Housing Type</a>   National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL)</li> </ul>	

<b>MD-8</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Partner with financial institutions and/or foundations to offer loans, rebates, grants, or other incentives for solar PV projects. (Financial institutions could include entities such as a local or regional bank, CDFI, or credit union).</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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In addition to state and federal incentives, organizations can also encourage solar development within their region by providing tax exemptions, rebates, or other financial incentives. Loans, rebates, or grants can improve the financial prospects of a solar project, allowing more community members to install solar.

<b>Recommended Verification:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a link to an application or form that are required for a solar PV system to be eligible for incentives or financing.</li> </ul>	
<b>Community Examples:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Loudoun County, VA</a>   SolSmart Silver</li> <li>• <a href="#">St. Louis Park, MN</a>   SolSmart Silver</li> </ul>	
<b>Resources:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Market Development and Finance</a>   SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments</li> </ul>	

<b>MD-9</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>Develop a regional funding model or institution that directly funds or facilitates new solar PV adoption within the region.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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The regional organization and its partners can work together to understand local needs and gaps in current funding or financing programs. Together, they can take action to develop a new funding model or institution to serve the region and fill identified gaps. New solar loans, rebates, or grants can improve the financial prospects of a solar project, allowing more residents and organizations in the region to access funds and install solar.

<b>Recommended Verification:</b>	
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- Signed memo describing the new regional funding model or institution, the role the regional organization played in developing or implementing the effort, and the types of solar projects that will be supported.

**Community Examples:**

- [Montgomery County, MD](#) | SolSmart Gold

**Resources:**

- [Market Development and Finance](#) | SolSmart's Toolkit for Local Governments

<b>MD-10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Develop a regional grant application process and/or team to apply for or sponsor competitive grants, maximizing the impact of state and federal funding opportunities for your members that alone would be ineligible.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>The regional organization should develop a process to apply for federal and state grants of which they are eligible for and will provide solar benefits; either for their member communities or directly assist in solar installations. The regional organization can also connect member communities and state and federal agencies providing funds directly to local government, provide technical assistance for grant applications, co-sponsor grants, connect members with appropriate grant co-sponsors if the regional organization is ineligible, and keep an eye on relevant grants and application timelines.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed memo summarizing the grant application process and outcomes</li> </ul>			

## Innovative Action

IA-1	Varies	<p>The actions identified in the categories above represent many of the most common and impactful efforts organizations are taking to make going solar easier and more affordable for residents and businesses. However, we know that organizations across the country are developing innovative ways to promote and deploy solar energy. If your organization has taken action that was not captured in any of the criteria above, please share it with us.</p>	□
<p>Innovative actions will be reviewed by a team of solar experts and each action may be worth up to 20 points.</p>			
<p><b>Recommended Verification:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide a memo describing the innovative action and include any supporting documentation or links that provide additional details.</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Community Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">Grayslake, IL</a>   SolSmart Bronze             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Grayslake Sustainable Business Initiative recognizes local businesses that are choosing to be more sustainable. Solar energy is emphasized by awarding a business automatic gold designation if they have installed a solar energy system.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <a href="#">Montgomery County, MD</a>   SolSmart Gold             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Montgomery County’s 4<sup>th</sup> Solar Co-op offered EV charging as an option through the solar co-op. This helps promote EV charging and can reduce costs through group purchasing.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			

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