Recognition and Technical Assistance for Growing Local Solar Markets

WHAT is SolSmart?

SolSmart is a national designation program designed to recognize cities, counties, small towns, and regional organizations for encouraging solar energy growth. Communities pursuing SolSmart designation, regardless of their level of solar energy experience, receive no-cost technical assistance from a team of national solar experts.

SolSmart designation at the Bronze, Silver, or Gold level provides high-profile, national recognition for communities that have made it faster, easier, and more affordable for residents and businesses to go solar. Achieving designation signals that a community is “open for solar business,” helping SolSmart communities attract economic development and create new jobs.

More than 400 communities in 41 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have achieved SolSmart designation. All municipalities, counties, and regional organizations are eligible to join the SolSmart program.

SolSmart is co-led by the International City/County Management Association and the Interstate Renewable Energy Council. It is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office.

How SolSmart Helps Communities

Unique Benefits

- Earn a nationally recognized designation from the premier solar program for local governments.
- Access no-cost technical assistance via national solar experts.
- Showcase your community’s achievements via the SolSmart website, media opportunities, and public events and announcements.
- Receive special awards for exceeding basic requirements and further distinguish your community from its peers.

Jobs and Growth

- Send a signal to solar installers and project developers that your community is solar-ready.
- Foster local solar market growth that can support American businesses and create local jobs.
- Research found that SolSmart communities increased their solar capacity by 69 kW per month on average — a 67% increase.

Efficient Government

- Make local processes more efficient, thereby better managing limited taxpayer resources.
- Harness solar energy on public lands or facilities to meet municipal electricity needs while reducing energy costs.
- Support your community’s goals for sustainability, renewable energy use, and/or climate change action.
In Their Own Words

“The SolSmart program was phenomenal. The resources that were provided were excellent, and having the chart on what actions are needed and how you achieve those actions was super-helpful. I can’t recommend it enough.”

— Monika Mann, Community and Economic Development Support Specialist, South St. Paul, Minnesota

“As a designated regional organization, we’ve been proud to help communities in the Dallas-Fort Worth region achieve their goals through SolSmart designation and to educate communities on the benefits that solar energy can offer.”

— Lori Clark, Program Manager, North Central Texas Council of Governments

Spur Local Solar Growth & Economic Development

Montgomery County, Maryland, has incorporated more than 7 MW of solar at government buildings, including microgrid projects at the public services headquarters and a correctional facility.

The city of Freeport, Illinois, adopted a zoning ordinance to help facilitate the growth of new solar projects.

Cedar Hill, Texas, trained planning, permitting, and inspection staff on national best practices for solar and solar + storage systems.

Learn More About SolSmart

Get Started at Solsmart.org

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