



Solar: Simple, Fast, and Cost Effective

PURPOSE

Rooftop solar installations in Oregon and Washington are growing at a rate of over 30% annually, providing an ever increasing number of jobs and a small but growing share of distributed clean energy. As residents increasingly choose to install solar electric systems, local jurisdictions and utilities are searching for systems to efficiently meet increased customer demand for permits and interconnection. Responding to this challenge, a team of local governments, utilities and industry partners has come together to develop solutions that make the process of going solar simpler, faster, and more cost effective for customers and the jurisdictions and utilities that serve them.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The Northwest Solar Communities initiative is one of eight teams working under the US Dept. of Energy's Rooftop Solar Challenge II, a nationwide effort to drive down the "soft costs" of rooftop solar installations. Northwest Solar Communities works to streamline and standardize solar installation processes and create a unified solar business corridor across the two-state area. By the end of 2016, Northwest Solar Communities will:

- Bring streamlined permitting to at least 2 million residents,
- Encourage standard interconnection practices for 80% of residents, and
- Pave the way for a doubling of rooftop solar installations across Oregon and Washington.

HISTORY

Northwest Solar Communities grew out of the 2012 Evergreen State Solar Partnership, which led to the adoption of streamlined permitting and interconnection in several Washington communities. Today, Northwest Solar Communities includes over 20 partners from Oregon and Washington, working to share best practices and align processes, within each state and where possible, across state lines.

APPROACH

Northwest Solar Communities seeks to streamline the installation of solar electric systems in four action areas: Permitting, Interconnection, Financing, and Planning. Workgroups led by jurisdictions and industry partners will create tools and templates in each action area to make solar easier and more cost effective. The participating Northwest Solar Communities will showcase these tools, encouraging others to join in the benefits of a growing solar economy. We invite partners to join us in our efforts to:

- Streamline and standardize permitting processes and interconnection standards.
- Improve market conditions by creating business certainty for solar PV deployment across multiple jurisdictions.
- Facilitate the adoption of solar financing options to make solar energy affordable for all residents.
- Share solar-positive planning ideas to help communities prepare for future solar growth.

Communities

- ☼ City of Bellevue
- ☼ City of Edmonds
- ☼ City of Eugene
- ☼ City of Hillsboro
- ☼ City of Kirkland
- ☼ City of Portland
- ☼ City of Seattle
- ☼ Clackamas County
- ☼ Lake County

Electric Utilities

- ☼ Avista
- ☼ Eugene Water & Electric Board
- ☼ Pacific Power
- ☼ Portland General Electric
- ☼ Puget Sound Energy
- ☼ Snohomish PUD
- ☼ Seattle City Light

Facilitators

- ☼ Northwest SEED
- ☼ Washington State Energy Office
- ☼ Oregon Department of Energy
- ☼ Solar Oregon

Industry

- ☼ Solar Washington
- ☼ Sustainable Connections
- ☼ Energy Trust of Oregon
- ☼ Interstate Renewable Energy Council
- ☼ WSU Energy Extension
- ☼ Oregon RC&D-Wy'East
- ☼ And more!





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OPPORTUNITIES FOR FEEDBACK

We welcome comments, questions, and improvements. Please send to:

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Learn more at www.nwsolarcommunities.org

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Solar Powering Your Community: A Guide for Local Governments. The U.S. Department of Energy developed this comprehensive resource to assist local governments and stakeholders in building sustainable local solar markets. The second edition of the guide contains the most recent lessons and successes from communities promoting solar energy. The guide introduces a range of policy and program options that have been successfully field tested in cities and counties around the country. www1.eere.energy.gov/library/default.aspx?page=7

Solar America Board for Codes and Standards (Solar ABCs): The Solar ABCs is a collaborative effort among experts to formally gather and prioritize input from the broad spectrum of solar photovoltaic stakeholders. This includes policy makers, manufacturers, installers, and consumers and results in coordinated recommendations to codes and standards making bodies for existing and new solar technologies. The U.S. Department of Energy funds Solar ABCs as part of its commitment to facilitate widespread adoption of safe, reliable, and cost-effective solar technologies. www.solarabcs.org

The U.S. has over 11,000 MW of installed solar electric capacity, enough to power more than 1.7 million American households.

Washington has installed 3 watts of solar PV generating capacity per capita; Oregon has 14.5 watts per capita. In contrast, Germany has 399.

The cost of installing solar in the U.S. is nearly double the cost in Germany, due mainly to the "soft" costs such as customer acquisition.

A new solar PV system is installed in the U.S. every 4 minutes.

