

DOE Program Launches Guide to Help Cities Go Solar

By Cherie Duvall Jones, National League of Cities (NLC)

Local governments looking to adopt solar energy technologies in their cities now have a new resource from the Department of Energy (DOE) that assists community leaders and local stakeholders in building sustainable local solar markets -

Designed as a comprehensive resource, "Solar Powering Your Community: A Guide for Local Governments" was recently released online by Solar America Cities, a partnership between DOE and a select group of cities that have committed to accelerating the adoption of solar energy technologies at the local level.

To help cities build a local solar infrastructure, the guide features a range of policy and program options that have been successfully field tested in cities around the country. It describes each policy or program, explains the benefits, provides implementation tips and options, and includes short examples of how solar technology has enabled cities to drive economic development, support clean energy jobs and reduce carbon emissions.

"We want to enable cities to take (solar power use) to the next level," said Hannah Muller, program lead for Solar America Cities. "We want to reach as many cities as possible. The guide walks you through how to even start promoting the use of solar power in cities whether you're an expert on solar energy or starting from scratch."

The publication outlines best practices and lessons learned from the 25 Solar America Cities and other local governments across the nation that have successfully increased solar energy use. Included in these best practices are how Boulder County, Cob., is making solar affordable with its "ClimateSmart Loan Program" and how Madison, Wis., is educating consumers and facilitating solar purchases through the Prospective Solar Owners Agent.

Since the best practices outlined have been designed to meet the needs of local governments in diverse geographic areas, the guide is to be used to stimulate ideas or as a framework to create a comprehensive solar plan for communities. Cities can tailor their approaches to fit their communities' particular needs and market barriers.

The guide features the seven following topics:

- Organizing and Strategizing Your Effort;
- Accelerating Demand through Policies and Incentives;
- Updating and Enforcing Local Rules and Regulations;
- Engaging Your Utility;
- Creating Jobs and Supporting Economic Development;
- Accelerating Demand Through Outreach and Education; and
- Leading by Example with Installations on Government Properties.

"The guide breaks it down into seven understandable sections — the seven types of things you want to work on if you really want to go big with solar in your city," Muller explained.

One city that continues to go big with solar as one of the 25 Solar America Cities is Portland, Ore. To honor its efforts to pursue a solar market transformation for its residents, businesses and city operations, Portland was presented with a Solar America Cities Award during NLC's Green Cities Conference and Expo, which was held in Portland last April.

To enable even more cities to increase solar energy use in their communities through innovative programs and policies that can then be replicated across the nation, DOE announced early last month that it was granted \$10 million through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for 40 new Solar America Cities Special Projects in 16 cities.

Details: To view the "Solar Powering Your Community" guide and to learn more about Solar America Cities, go to [www.solaramencacities .energy.gov](http://www.solaramencacities.energy.gov).

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