SolSmart Advisors
2018 Community-Based Application

Issue Date: April 3, 2018
Closing Date: June 4, 2018

<u>HOST COMMUNITY INTRODUCTION</u>

SolSmart is seeking local governments interested in hosting SolSmart Advisors for approximately six-month engagements beginning in January 2019. Advisors are program-funded, experienced staff members recruited to help communities achieve solar-related goals and earn SolSmart designation. An Advisor will work within a community or region for the term of the engagement and provide on-the-ground, in-depth technical assistance.

This application is for <u>local governments</u> (cities, counties, villages, towns, etc.) that want to apply to host a SolSmart Advisor for itself and/or a group of communities in its region. A "Host Community" serves as the physical host to the SolSmart Advisor, works with the Advisor and provides project management support, and plays a strong role in ensuring the communities served by the Advisor achieve designation under SolSmart. Alternatively, a Host Community may nominate a local organization at which the Advisor could have a work space, if that is preferable.[1]

The most competitive applications will include a partnership between two or more communities ("a cohort")[2], with additional communities being preferable.

Through this application process, SolSmart hopes to award five (5) communities/cohorts with the opportunity to host an Advisor. SolSmart reserves the right to award more or fewer communities/cohorts with the opportunity to host an Advisor.

A community or cohort that wants to participate in the Advisors program, but does not want to apply or host an Advisor, can look to the Organizational-based Advisor track as an alternative option. In this case, the community/cohort would engage a third-party organization to lead and submit the application. The organization would preferably have existing staff capacity to fulfill the Advisor role. In this track, the funds would be disseminated to the organization serving as the Advisor, and that organization would dispatch its resources to assist each community named in their Advisor application. For more details on the Organizational-based Track, click here.

---

[1] See SolSmart Advisors' previous work with Michiana Area Council of Governments (IN) and Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (MA)

[2] See SolSmart Advisors' previous work with Charlottesville/Albemarle County, VA and five Florida communities. Cohorts could be comprised of multiple municipalities, multiple counties, or a combination of both. A potential cohort could also be a county and municipalities within that county's boundaries.

INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS

A complete Host Community Application will include:
1. **Completed Host Community Questionnaire** (Appendix A)
2. **Completed Solar Statement(s) and SolSmart Application(s)** (see Evaluation Criteria for more information)
3. **Project Narrative** (1-3 pages)
   a. Please write a narrative detailing how the community/cohort intends to fully leverage the opportunity presented by the SolSmart Advisor, and what the Advisor will work on during the engagement. (See Evaluation Criteria section below for more information)
4. **Staff Commitments** [Optional, but strongly encouraged] (Appendix B)

Applications must be submitted electronically to SolSmart TAP Program Director Zach Greene, at zgreene@solarfound.org. Subject lines should read **"SolSmart Community-Based Advisor Application"**.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

A. **Number of Communities Served (50%)**

SolSmart prefers Advisors work with multiple communities, which leads to more designees and more opportunities for beneficial harmonization of regional solar efforts. Therefore, SolSmart will consider the number of communities listed in an application as a factor in determining the competitiveness of an application. Applicants will list participating communities in the Host Community Questionnaire (Appendix A).

I. **Level of Need**

A primary goal of Advisors is to help communities attain SolSmart designation. Although cohorts applying for an Advisor can contain current SolSmart designees, SolSmart will provide more weight to undesignated communities when evaluating the "Number of Communities Served" criterion.

II. **Completed Solar Statement(s) and SolSmart Application(s)**

A Solar Statement (PR-1) is a prerequisite for SolSmart designation and they are **required** from each community listed in the Host Community Questionnaire (Appendix A). If a community does not submit a Solar Statement by the closing date of this application (June 4, 2018), it will not be included in the "Number of Communities Served" criterion.

All communities participating in SolSmart must complete a SolSmart application to provide a baseline of their current efforts. If a community is listed in the Host Community Questionnaire, SolSmart requests that it has completed the SolSmart application by the closing date of this Host Community Application (June 4, 2018), but it is not required. However, communities/cohorts with completed

SolSmart applications will receive preferential consideration. **All awardees must submit their SolSmart applications no later than a month following their selection.**

B. **Project Narrative (50%)**
This Project Narrative will be evaluated based on:
1) The role/activities envisioned for the Advisor (specifically, SolSmart requests applicants cite specific SolSmart criteria where applicable);
2) Whether the applicant understands the purpose, goals, and expectations of the SolSmart Advisor program;
3) The strength of the project approach, with strong emphasis on demonstrating how the Advisor will adequately serve all communities covered by this application;
4) Whether the Host Community understands the commitment inherent in receiving an Advisor;
5) Whether it includes a pathway to a certain tier of SolSmart designation for all communities included in the Advisor application.

C. **Staff Commitments (Optional, but leads to preferential consideration)**
I. SolSmart finds that Advisors are most successful when there is buy-in across multiple government departments. Therefore, applicants providing the signatures and contact information of their government administrator (e.g. city manager, "strong" mayor, county administrator) **and** the department head(s) responsible for planning, zoning, and/or permitting will receive preferential consideration. While SolSmart prefers all relevant staff sign, applicants can submit partially completed forms. If applying as a cohort, SolSmart prefers each community complete a separate Staff Commitments form. However, SolSmart will consider any forms provided.

TIMELINE[3]

- **April 2**: Application opens
- **April 9, 2018**: Webinar for interested communities/cohorts
- **April 24, 2018**: Webinar for interested communities/cohorts
- **May 16, 2018**: Webinar for interested communities/cohorts
- **June 4, 2018 @ 12pm PDT:** Application closes
- **June 4 – June 30, 2018**: SolSmart will review applications
- **June 30, 2018**: SolSmart will announce the Host Communities
- **July – October 2018:** Selected Host Communities will work with SolSmart to 1) refine their work plans, 2) develop and disseminate position descriptions for the Advisor and

---

[3] Timeline is subject to change. Please refer to solsmart.org/news/applications-open-for-third-round-of-solsmart-advisors

conduct interviews, and 3) finalize a Memorandum of Understanding related to the engagement
- **October 31, 2018:** All Advisor candidates selected
- **Nov/Dec 2018:** Advisor training in Washington, D.C.
- **January 2019:** Advisors engagements begin

GOALS, ROLES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The primary objective of SolSmart Advisors is to provide communities/cohorts with in-depth support for achieving SolSmart designation through engagements lasting approximately 26 weeks. Once selected, Advisors will work with the Host Community to qualify the communities covered by this application for SolSmart designation. Through these engagements, the SolSmart program sees a prime opportunity for Advisors to become part of the next generation of solar market leaders. The following roles and responsibilities for the SolSmart program, SolSmart Advisor, and Host Community are critical to the attainment of these goals.

The SolSmart program will:

1. Work with the Host Communities to recruit SolSmart Advisors through an open and competitive process. Alternatively, Host Communities can nominate existing staff to serve as the Advisor. The SolSmart program will vet and approve all community-nominated candidates. Applicants wishing to nominate an Advisor should submit a CV or resume for the candidate (in PDF format) with this application.

2. Assist the Host Community in developing a work plan for the engagement that reflects community values and priorities while representing a clear path to SolSmart designation.

3. Provide bi-weekly stipends of $2,500 (subject to change) to SolSmart Advisors over the duration of the engagement.

4. Provide the SolSmart Advisor with the training and resources required for success.

5. Monitor engagement progress via project management plans, regular check-in calls, and interim and final project reports.

6. Provide additional technical assistance support on an as-needed basis.

7. Connect Advisors with one or more local solar community contacts to help them understand solar company needs and priorities.

The Host Community will:

1. Maintain a clear, ongoing commitment to achieving SolSmart designation.

2. Work with the SolSmart team to develop a work plan for the engagement that reflects community values and priorities while representing a clear path to SolSmart designation.

3. Assign a project Sponsor and Supervisor within the community to the Advisor. Sponsors provide Advisors with reliable access to decision makers in the community and help maintain community support for achieving designation. Examples of individuals best

suited for this role include local elected officials, certain department heads, and directors of organizations. Supervisors provide day-to-day assistance and guidance to the Advisor. Supervisors will help the Advisor manage project timelines and other conditions of the Project Management Plan and will participate in check-in calls with the SolSmart Technical Assistance Provider team and with interim and final project reporting.

4. Provide the Advisor with adequate office space, equipment, access to staff across all relevant departments, and any relevant non-confidential internal information and resources.

5. Allow the engagement, including its successes and lessons learned, to be promoted publicly by the SolSmart program.

The SolSmart Advisor will:

1. Retain a strong focus on helping the Host Community and other participating communities achieve designation and maximize the impact of the engagement.

2. Evaluate existing community processes and programs to determine the best strategy for helping the all communities achieve designation by leveraging industry-leading best practices.

3. Provide technical assistance to communities and work with them to achieve designation.

4. Participate in regular check-in calls, project management activities, and project reporting.

5. Coordinate effectively and work professionally with the Supervisor, other staff, and the public.

6. Identify and fully leverage opportunities to promote the work of the Advisors and Host Communities.

BACKGROUND

SolSmart is a national solar designation and technical assistance program funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office. It recognizes local governments for taking key steps to address barriers to solar energy development by awarding them a SolSmart designation at one of three levels. The International City/County Management Association leads the designation efforts of SolSmart and is supported by the National Civic League; Home Innovation Research Labs; Meister Consultants Group, A Cadmus Company; and The Solar Foundation.

Communities seeking SolSmart designation are eligible to receive no-cost technical assistance from a team of national experts. The Solar Foundation leads the technical assistance efforts and is supported by National Renewable Energy Laboratory; Meister Consultants Group, A Cadmus Company; the Regulatory Assistance Project; the Electric Power Research Institute; the National League of Cities; the National Association of Counties; Brooks Engineering; and the Solar Energy Industries Association.

Since SolSmart's formal launch in April 2016, 192 local governments have earned designation. SolSmart seeks to designate a minimum of 300 local government by the end of October 2020.

One strategy for achieving this ambitious goal is the SolSmart Advisors program. This program recruits and matches a select number of local governments with experienced individuals who work in the communities they serve for approximately six months, with the primary objective of ensuring these communities become designated under the SolSmart program. SolSmart has conducted two of three recruitment rounds anticipated under the program, resulting in 24 Advisors serving approximately 130 individual local governments.

APPENDIX A

1. **Host Community Questionnaire**

PART I: HOST COMMUNITY INFORMATION

This application is for local governments (cities, counties, villages, towns, etc.) that want to apply to host a SolSmart Advisor for itself and/or a group of communities ("cohort") in its region. A Host Community serves as the physical host to the SolSmart Advisor, works with the Advisor and provides project management support, and plays a strong role in ensuring the communities served by the Advisor achieve designation under SolSmart.

The most competitive applications will include a partnership between two or more communities ("a cohort") , with additional communities being preferable.

Lead Applicant Community Name ("Host Community")

Names of All Communities to be Served by SolSmart Advisor

Host Community Street Address

City   State   ZIP Code

Advisor Work Location (if different from above; list multiple if necessary)

Is the Advisors Work Location accessible by public transportation?

Yes.   No, a private vehicle is required.

Each Host Community must assign a project Sponsor and Supervisor to support the Advisor. Sponsors provide Advisors with reliable access to decision makers in the community and help maintain community support for achieving designation. Examples of individuals best suited for this role include local elected officials and certain department heads. Supervisors provide day-to-day assistance and guidance to the Advisor. Supervisors will help the Advisor manage project timelines and other project management requirements, including (but not limited to) check-in calls and project reporting with the Advisor and the SolSmart team.

Sponsor Name, Title, Department

Sponsor Email   Sponsor Telephone

Supervisor Name, Title, Department

Supervisor Email   Supervisor Telephone

PIO/Press Contact Name   PIO/Press Contact Email/Telephone

Will any of the communities named on this application be willing and able to provide cost share?

   Yes   Maybe   No

Is there any potential for Advisors to be kept on as full-time employees after the SolSmart engagement ends?

   Yes   Maybe   No

- -

PART VI: SUBMITTAL

I, the undersigned Host Community Sponsor, acknowledge that I have read and understand the requirements and responsibilities of the SolSmart Advisors program as described in this application and that all responses are correct to the best of my knowledge. By signing this application, I represent that I have the authority to apply on behalf of the Host Community and commit to the roles and responsibilities listed herein. I also permit the SolSmart team to use information provided in this application for the recruitment of Advisors.

Sponsor Signature   Date

Submit this Questionnaire, along with the other required application materials, to Zach Greene (zgreene@solarfound.org) by Monday, June 4, 2018.

APPENDIX B

1. **Staff Commitments**

2018 Community-Based Advisor Application Staff Commitments

Application Deadline: June 4, 2018

SolSmart finds that Advisors are most successful when there is buy-in across multiple government departments. Therefore, applicants providing the signatures and contact information of their government administrator (e.g. city manager, "strong" mayor, county administrator) and the department head(s) responsible for planning, zoning, and/or permitting will receive special consideration. While SolSmart prefers all relevant staff sign, applicants can submit partially completed forms.

If applying as a cohort, SolSmart prefers each community complete a separate Staff Commitments form. However, SolSmart will consider any forms provided.

Local Government Administrator

Name:

Email: Phone #:

Signature: _____

Department Head - Planning

Name:

Dept. Name:

Email: Phone #:

Signature: _____

Department Head - Zoning

Name:

Dept. Name:

Email: Phone #:

Signature: _____

Department Head - Permitting

Name:

Dept. Name:

Email: Phone #:

Signature: _____