

SOLSMART APPLICATION: Modified Pathway



The Modified Pathway is designed for communities that ***do not*** control permitting, planning and zoning, and/or inspection processes. If your community does control these processes, please use our [Standard Designation application](#).

There are three levels of SolSmart designation for communities – below are the requirements for each:

BRONZE:

- Complete four prerequisite actions:
 - Solar Statement (PR-1)
 - Planning and zoning guidance (PR-2)
 - Inspection checklist (PR-3)
 - Permitting training (PR-4)
- Earn a total of 40 points from actions across the four Special Focus Categories: Solar Rights; Utility Engagement; Community Engagement; and Market Development and Finance.

SILVER:

- Fulfill SolSmart Bronze prerequisites.

- Complete the Silver planning prerequisite (PR-5).
- Earn 80 points overall from actions taken in the Special Focus Categories.

GOLD:

- Fulfill SolSmart Silver prerequisites.
- Earn 150 points overall from actions taken in the Special Focus Categories.

SPECIAL AWARDS:

- Communities that earn 60% of the points in a given category are eligible for special recognition.

Community Data

Community applying:

State:

Community website:

Population:

Other solar awards/recognition earned by community:

kW of installed solar or number of installations:

Contact Information

Local contact:

Contact title:

Organization:

Department:

Contact email:

Contact phone:

- I am authorized to apply for and seek recognition for my community.
- I understand that community data submitted through this application will be shared online.

SOLAR STATEMENT (PR-1)

PR-1: Solar Statement – Required for all levels of designation

Our Solar Statement: *(Cut and paste your Solar Statement in the box below)*

Communities interested in pursuing SolSmart designation must indicate their commitment to supporting solar development in their community.

These letters should include:

- *A commitment to participate in the SolSmart designation process*
- *A statement of solar goals, areas of focus or community priorities (e.g. Encouraging solar PV development on vacant lots or supporting non-profit led initiatives)*
- *Past achievements or programs related to solar PV and/or renewable energy*
- *Commitment to tracking metrics related to solar PV and/or provide benchmark of available solar metrics (i.e. number of installed municipal systems or growth in residential installations)*
- *A commitment of staff time and resources to improve the local environment for solar PV*

These letters do not need to be more than a page in length. SolSmart encourages you to use the [Solar Statement template](#).

Documentation: *(Please share a link to a public webpage where your Solar Statement is displayed or attach it as a document.)*

ADDITIONAL PREREQUISITES



- To earn SolSmart Bronze designation - complete **PR-2, PR-3, and PR-4.**
- To earn SolSmart Silver designation - complete all Bronze prerequisites and **PR-5.**

Action	Points	We've done this!	Documentation
<p>Planning and Zoning Guidance</p> <p>PR-2: Provide guidance on planning, zoning and development best practices to communities in the county through webinars, in-person meetings, one-on-one calls or trainings.</p>	Req'd for Bronze	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
<p>Inspection Checklist</p> <p>PR-3: Collaborate with local inspection departments to develop an inspection checklist for the region, and share results publicly through webinars, in-person meetings, training and/or the county's website. Encourage communities to integrate the checklist into their inspection processes.</p>	Req'd for Bronze	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
<p>Permitting Training</p> <p>PR-4: Host regional training or discussion on best practices in permitting for communities in the county.</p>	Req'd for Bronze	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
<p>Silver Planning Prerequisite</p> <p>PR-5: Incorporate solar into county-wide comprehensive plans and/or economic development plans, including quantifiable targets or metrics.</p>	Req'd for Silver & Gold	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:


SPECIAL FOCUS CATEGORIES

- To earn SolSmart Bronze designation – **achieve 40 points** (and complete PR-1, PR-2, PR-3 and PR-4).
- To earn SolSmart Silver designation – **achieve 80 points** (and complete all Bronze prerequisites and PR-5).
- To earn SolSmart Gold designation – **achieve 150 points** (and complete all Bronze and Silver prerequisites).


Special Focus: Solar Rights

Action	Points	We've done this!	Documentation
SR-1: Conduct review of state policies related to protecting rights of property owners to install solar and solar system owners' right to sunlight on their property. Make this information available to residents.	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
SR-2: Provide consumer protection resources on solar PV which help consumers make informed solar PV purchasing decisions.	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
SR-3: Develop local process to enable solar rights through a solar access ordinance.	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
SR-4: Offer procedure for recording solar easements for property owners.	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
SR-5a: Engage homeowners and neighborhood associations and discourage unnecessarily restrictive requirements for solar PV through meetings with leadership.	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
 Earn additional points: SR-5b: Encourage subdivisions to consider shared solar allowances.	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
 Earn additional points: SR-5c: Work with homeowners associations to develop appropriate guideline documents for solar PV.	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
Total Points: Add up the total number of points you believe you have achieved in this category.			


Special Focus: Utility Engagement

Action	Points	We've done this!	Documentation
U-1: Review best practices for integrating interconnection with electrical inspections and share best practices with staff.	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
U-2: Discuss community or shared solar PV programs with the local utility.	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
U-3a: Engage and communicate with the utility on community goals for solar PV, net metering, and interconnection processes.	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
 Earn additional points: U-3b: Coordinate with regional organizations or other local governments to engage utilities.	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
U-4: Coordinate utility and city inspections for solar PV, reducing the total number of inspections needed.	20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
U-5: Launch and support a utility-provided community solar program.	20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
Total Points: Add up the total number of points you believe you have achieved in this category.			

Special Focus: Community Engagement

Action	Points	We've done this!	Documentation
CE-1: Convene an active energy task force or solar working group that meets at least three times per year.	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
CE-2: Create a solar landing page on local government's website with information on the community's solar goals and local resources for solar development.	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
CE-3: Encourage solar PV on non-profit or community facilities through fee waivers, technical assistance, or other support.	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
CE-4a: Support or host a community-group purchase program (e.g., Solarize).	20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
 Earn additional points: CE-4b: Design program or create financing support options to encourage low-to-moderate income participation in community solar initiatives.	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
CE-5a: Host a solar workshop open to the general public and/or local government staff explaining solar PV opportunities and policies.	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
CE-5b: Create and distribute educational materials at relevant community events and through local government channels.	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
CE-5c: Establish partnerships with local non-profits or organizations on solar PV with multi-year goal or planned initiatives.	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
CE-5d: Publicly encourage community solar projects or solar PV projects on community facilities.	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
CE-5e: Engage the community in robust, ongoing discussion around climate, energy, or sustainability plans.	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
CE-6: Create and publish job training and placement opportunities for solar in coordination with local community colleges.	20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
CE-7: Conduct feasibility analysis for solar PV on brownfields, landfills, formerly contaminated lands and/or other under-utilized properties.	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
CE-8: Install or lease land for solar PV development on brownfields, landfills, formerly contaminated lands and/or other under-utilized properties.	20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
CE-9: Engage with regional organizations on advancing solar PV policies in the region including, but not limited to, unified permitting processes and group procurement opportunities.	20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
CE-10: Demonstrate activity in state-level conversations regarding solar PV.	20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
CE-11: Create and/or share an interactive solar map for your community.	20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
Total Points: Add up the total number of points you believe you have achieved in this category.			

Special Focus: Market Development and Finance

Action	Points	We've done this!	Documentation
MDF-1: Provide resources on active solar installers and/or local incentives for solar PV.	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
MDF-2: Make solar PV metrics publicly available.	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
MDF-3: Provide information to consumers about different solar PV financing options, including commercial options, such as Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing.	5	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
MDF-4: Conduct feasibility analysis for solar PV installations on public facilities.	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
MDF-5: Install solar PV on local facilities.	20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
MDF-6a: If applicable, provide PACE financing in your community.	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
 Earn additional points: MDF-6b: Demonstrate that PACE financing has been used to finance solar PV in your community.	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
MDF-7: Provide local incentives (i.e. permit fee waivers or rebates) or locally-enabled finance (e.g., a revolving loan fund) for solar PV.	20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
MDF-8: Engage local banks, credit unions, foundations and/or community funds about lending for solar PV projects through in-person meetings, discussions, and/or workshops.	20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
MDF-9: Demonstrate that the community's installed per capita capacity is above top 20% of states (>99 watts/person).	20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
MDF-10: Integrate solar PV with other distributed or emerging technologies such as storage, combined heat and power systems or electric vehicles in at least one installed or proposed project.	20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
MDF-11: Develop feasibility analysis or planning for resilient solar technologies for critical facilities and emergency planning such as solar and storage.	20	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share link:
Total Points: Add up the total number of points you believe you have achieved in this category.			

INNOVATIVE ACTIONS

The actions identified in the categories above represent many of the most common and impactful efforts communities are taking to reduce soft costs and make going solar easier and more affordable for residents. However, we know that communities across the country are developing innovative ways to help reduce soft costs. If your community has taken action to reduce soft costs that wasn't captured in the above application, please share it with us in the table below. Innovative actions will be reviewed by a team of solar experts and each action may be worth up to 20 points.

Category	Action(s)	Documentation
Solar Rights		Share link:
Utility Engagement		Share link:
Community Engagement		Share link:
Market Development and Finance		Share link:

DESIGNATION CHECKLIST

	Points	Step Completed
SOLAR STATEMENT		
PR-1: Solar Statement	Required for Bronze	<input type="checkbox"/>
ADDITIONAL PREREQUISITES		
PR-2: Planning and Zoning Guidance	Required for Bronze	<input type="checkbox"/>
PR-3: Inspection Checklist	Required for Bronze	<input type="checkbox"/>
PR-4: Permitting Training	Required for Bronze	<input type="checkbox"/>
PR-5: Planning	Required for Silver & Gold	<input type="checkbox"/>
SPECIAL FOCUS CATEGORY POINTS		
Solar Rights	Points:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Utility Engagement	Points:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Engagement	Points:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Market Development and Finance	Points:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total Points		
Need 40 for Bronze, 80 for Silver, and 150 for Gold.		