



Solar for All: Solar for Energy Communities Highlights

Highlights from the \$7 billion Solar for All selected applicants

Background: The Solar for All program is a monumental \$7 billion investment to enable low-income and disadvantaged communities to deploy and benefit from distributed solar energy. The program is designed to deliver on the Biden-Harris Administration’s commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollution, save communities money on their utility bills, create high-quality jobs, and mobilize financing to stimulate the deployment of more residential solar projects. 100% of the \$7 billion in funding for the Solar for All program is dedicated to low-income and disadvantaged communities, exceeding President Biden’s Justice40 commitment.

Several Solar for All applications that have been selected for funding under this monumental program cover geographies that are considered “energy communities.” As defined by the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service, these are areas with brownfield sites; areas within a census tract where a coal mine closed after 1999 or a coal-fired power plant was retired after 2009; or areas where the unemployment rate is at or above the national average for the previous year and has 0.17% or more direct employment related to oil, coal or natural gas or has 25% or greater local tax revenues related to oil, coal or natural gas. As the United States shifts to a cleaner economy, it is vital that no communities get left behind. Investing in solar in these communities in particular is essential to ensuring they can successfully create a more sustainable, resilient, and equitable economic future.

This non-exhaustive sample of plans demonstrates how Solar for All programs nationwide will help assist this transition. Please note the examples featured below are by no means comprehensive or exhaustive, and some details may change as the programs are implemented.

Disclaimer: The summaries are based on information provided in the application packages that selected applicants submitted to EPA and that were reviewed and selected in accordance with the evaluation criteria in Section V.A: Evaluation Criteria of the Notice of Funding Opportunity. Note that EPA will work with the selected applicants to refine their application packages into detailed workplans that are subject to final approval from the EPA Award Official. Note that selections are contingent on resolution of all administrative disputes relating to the competition.

Bonneville Environmental Foundation (BEF), serving Wyoming: Bonneville Environmental Foundation is a national nonprofit that works with partners across several sectors to create entrepreneurial solutions that help catalyze a renewable energy future, and will serve energy communities in the state of Wyoming

with its Solar for All funds. 21 of 23 counties in Wyoming are considered energy communities, and the Eastern and Western Wyoming non-metropolitan areas rank #8 and #9 among the top 70 areas for coal-related employment across the nation, according to the Interagency Working Group on Coal & Power Plan Communities. BEF's proposed plan includes a strategy to consider impacts on just transition job, apprenticeship, and business opportunities when making investment decisions. BEF proposes to engage several partners such as the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Chambers of Commerce and other community-based organizations to help conduct outreach about solar employment in these communities specifically.

Growth Opportunity Partners, Inc.: Led by Growth Opportunity Partners, Inc. (the country's first African-American-led green bank), the Industrial Heartland Solar Coalition is composed of 31 communities from eight states across America's industrial heartland – promising to usher in a new era for solar deployment and bring the clean energy transition to communities from the Midwest to the rust belt. Areas served through this program have a legacy of manufacturing and coal production, resulting in long-term economic hardship and environmental harm including brownfields and contaminated lands. For example, the City of Cincinnati, OH is exploring residential-serving community solar on a brownfield site. The City of Grand Rapids, MI proposes to work with its utility to establish a new five-megawatt solar project that will deliver community solar to low-income residents at a city-owned superfund site that has been fully remediated by EPA. This collaborative solar acceleration program will drive substantial climate, economic, and environmental justice benefits across America's industrial heartland.

Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy: Recognizing the importance of transitioning traditional energy communities to solar, the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (Michigan EGLE) emphasizes the development of clean energy projects sited on brownfields in its Solar for All award application. During the one-year planning period, Michigan EGLE plans to conduct pre-construction studies to identify favorable solar development sites across brownfields and landfills in the region and then prioritize projects sited in those areas in the subrecipient selection process. A portion of the program's 25% of funds set aside for technical assistance support for subrecipients will go toward addressing pre-development needs and challenges for projects located in remediated areas, vacant lots, or other sites where solar development has strong potential to revitalize communities.

Midwest Tribal Energy Resources Association, Inc.: The Midwest Tribal Energy Resources Association, Inc.'s proposed program, Missouri Solar for All, will primarily cover low-income and disadvantaged tribal communities across Missouri, many of which are located in and near areas with recent coal facility closures. In 2022, coal provided 66% of Missouri's net generation – the fourth-highest share of coal-fired generation of any state. Missouri Solar for All aims to change that, reducing dependence on fossil fuels by prioritizing solar-plus-storage projects that provide a more reliable energy source for the state. In its technical assistance, the Missouri for All program will also prioritize opportunities to maximize community resilience and community benefits, engaging with local partners who have expertise in developing community solar on former brownfield sites. Solar for All funding makes this type of investment financially possible for the first time and can will benefit communities that have historically experienced a disproportionate burden of environmental hazards.

New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department: According to the Department of Energy, energy jobs account for 7.3% of New Mexico's total employment, but currently 42% of those energy jobs are in the fossil fuel industry, among the highest rates in the region. The New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) understands that focusing workforce development resources in the state's many traditional energy communities will be key to ensuring local workers can benefit from New Mexico's clean energy transition. To ensure the project's success and foster community development, EMNRD has created a comprehensive strategy to attract, train, and retain the skilled and diverse local workforce required to implement its Solar for All program – proposing millions of their funds be designated for workforce development activities that provide New Mexicans with comprehensive solar energy training for those who are currently in fossil fuel industries. These activities will be supported by partners including the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, the New Mexico Indian Affairs Department, the Renewable Energy Industries Association of New Mexico, New Mexico Sustainable Communities Coalition, several area colleges and many other association partners. Through outreach, job training and apprenticeship opportunities, EMNRD will create pipelines to solar jobs for New Mexicans living in traditional energy communities. Creation of these jobs will also contribute to greater economic opportunity in the state: in New Mexico, clean energy jobs typically offer hourly wages approximately 11.7% higher than the state's median wage.

Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority: Approximately 44% of Pennsylvania's population lives within the Appalachian Region – a Department of Energy priority region for communities susceptible to coal-specific job losses. To advance the transition to the clean energy economy in this region, the Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority (PEDA) has created a Solar for All strategy that centers workforce training programs, with the goal of creating and supporting thousands of new jobs in the solar and energy efficiency space over the five-year performance period – many of which will be filled by workers previously employed by the fossil fuel industry. PEDA has extensive experience running programs that emphasize workforce training models that prepare and directly connect individuals from low-income communities to middle-class career pathways in the clean energy sector, drawing on proven outreach strategies and engagement with local labor partners.

These six organizations, along with 54 other highly qualified selectees, will together deliver solar to energy communities across the nation, transforming America's energy story and legacy. By funding these 60 selected applicants, EPA will deliver on the Biden Administration's promise to create thousands of new solar jobs and speed our nation's transition to a clean energy economy.

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