

# Solar for Low Income Families

## DC Small-Scale Solar Initiative (DCSI)



**George Nichols**

Vermont Energy Investment Corp. (VEIC)

District of Columbia, Sustainable Energy Utility

DC Small-Scale Solar Initiative (DCSI)

The DC Sustainable Energy Utility is a project of the Sustainable Energy Partnership under contract to the District Department of the Environment.



Government of the District of Columbia  
Vincent C. Gray, Mayor





# VEIC

- **Mission-driven nonprofit**
- **25 years reducing economic, environmental costs of energy**
  - Energy efficiency
  - Renewable energy
  - Transportation
- **National & international consulting & implementation**
  - Program design, planning, & evaluation; policy & advocacy, research & development
  - Regulators, government agencies, utilities, foundations, advocates
- **3 Energy Efficiency Utilities**



# What Is the Sustainable Energy Utility?

- Clean & Affordable Energy Act (2008)
- Ratepayer-funded, privately operated

**\$7 million in FY 2011**

**\$15 million in FY 2012**

**\$17.5 million in FY 2013**

**\$20 million in FY 2014**

- Performance-based contract to DDOE
- Designed to help District households, businesses, and institutions **save energy and money** through **energy efficiency** and **renewable energy** programs.



## Why low-income solar in the District?

- Recent efforts focused on “motivated” participants
  - Local Community Solar Coops and DDOE
  - Renewable Energy Incentive Program (REIP)
- Previous efforts increased participation...but
- Significant differences in accessibility to renewables Wards 7 and 8
- Launched DC small scale low income solar initiative in spring 2012 (DCSI)



# Program Overview

- To reduce burden of cost to participate in renewable energy technology in low income communities
- RFP Process -- 3 contractors selected
- Initial installation goal = 20 systems
- Final installation = 87 systems
- Keys to Success
  - Education and Outreach
  - Leveraging Resources and Programs
  - Partnering with Trusted Leaders
  - Establish Process for Early Feedback





# Clean Energy for ALL

- Wards 7 & 8 very underserved by renewable technologies
- DC SEU expanded opportunities for both solar PV for homeowners and jobs for residents
- 87 installations on low-income homes completed by Fall 2012



# Financial Mechanisms

- 3 different approaches to financing projects by contractors
- All solar panels are owned by homeowners at project completion
- SRECs are owned temporarily by installer or 3<sup>rd</sup> party financier
- No out-of-pocket costs to homeowner



# Conclusion

- The program
  - ❑ recognized political role was necessary for success
  - ❑ identified tools of choice = education, marketing, trusted partners, supporting organizations, and financial incentives
  - ❑ incorporated job training
  - ❑ allowed for creativity
  - ❑ sought to provide all residents an opportunity to enjoy benefits from new technology of renewal energy





**GRID Alternatives**

**DCSEU**

# Thank You! Any Questions?

George Nichols  
Public Affairs & Policy Advisor  
DC SEU/VEIC  
80 M Street SE, Suite 310  
Washington, DC 20003  
gnichols@dcseu.org  
(202) 677- 4820  
[www.dcseu.org](http://www.dcseu.org) or [www.veic.org](http://www.veic.org)

