

# SOLAR ENERGY RESOURCES - Local Government Website Template

## Is Solar Right for You?

This guide from the U.S. Department of Energy can help answer almost any question you have about going solar:

[A Consumer's Guide: Get Your Power from the Sun.](#)

### 1) Assess your property

Take a look at your roof! A great first stop for anyone interested in solar, this [free online tool](#) estimates the amount of electricity you can produce with a solar array at your home or business.

## PVWatts® Calculator

If you live in Washington, D.C., [this is a great mapping tool](#) that can help you estimate system size, cost, revenue, payback period, and environmental benefits of a potential rooftop solar PV system for any DC address.



### 2) Find local incentives

This [database](#) provides up-to-date information on clean energy incentives available in localities across the country. This includes a 30% federal tax credit on the installed cost of a PV system, along with utility rebates and tax incentives available at the state and local level.



### 3) Learn about your finance options

Cash, loan, lease, or other? This [4-page guide](#) provides an overview of the options for financing a solar energy system, including a table with a side-by-side comparison on the key features of each.

- Clean Energy States Alliance, 2014: [A Homeowner's Guide to Solar Financing: Leases, Loans and PPAs](#)
- DOE, 2010: [Homeowners Guide to Financing a Grid-Connected Solar Electric System](#)
- Leasing: [Solar Leasing for Residential Photovoltaic Systems](#)
- Power Purchase Agreement (PPA): [A Customer's Guide to Power Purchase Agreements](#)
- Solar Loans: [Banks and lenders offering solar loans](#) (EnergySage)
- Community Bulk Purchasing Groups: [Community Power Network](#) provides resources for joining or starting a solar bulk purchase, which can achieve 15-45% savings for each participant.
- Collaborative Solar Procurement: [Purchasing Power: Best Practices Guide to Collaborative Solar Procurement](#)
- Interstate Renewable Energy Council 2015 [Solar Power Purchase Agreements: a Toolkit for Local Governments](#)

#### 4) Find a contractor

The [EnergySage Marketplace](#) is a free online tool allowing comparison of quotes from multiple pre-screened installers. Enter your address, create a property profile, then receive quotes from qualified installers in an apples-to-apples format. From there, you can interact with the installers directly and select the best quote.



The [Geostellar](#) online solar marketplace provides free, independent cost-benefit comparisons of solar purchasing options. The tool estimates your property's potential solar capacity using sophisticated geospatial data, recommends solar equipment based on your location and roof diagnostics, and estimates the price of various financing options, as well as your projected savings over time.



Or, you can search for contractors directly. Use [NABCEP's installer locator](#) to find service providers in your area. These installers are certified through a third-party network.



Raising Standards. Promoting Confidence.

#### 5). What are SRECs and what should you do with them?

Solar renewable energy certificates, or credits (SRECs), can provide an additional funding stream for solar installations, but are. These SREC Guides from [DC SUN](#) and [Maryland SUN](#) provide a good overview of SRECs and lay out the pros and cons of available options for selling, or keeping, SRECs. This [brief video from Center for Resource Solutions](#) shows how RECs are created, traded, and tracked.

Two of the largest sites for selling and trading SRECs are:

[SRECtrade.com](#) –SREC trade and management firm for the spot and forward markets



[Flett Exchange](#) – an environmental services exchange platform with an online SREC marketplace



### Solar in Your Jurisdiction

#### Permitting:

Permit Application Checklist: *[Link to jurisdiction's solar permit application or checklist]*

[SolarPermit.org](http://SolarPermit.org) hosts the National Solar Permitting Database, a free online database of solar permitting requirements in cities and counties across the country.



[ProjectPermit.org](http://ProjectPermit.org) is an interactive website from the Vote Solar Initiative that scores municipal solar permitting practices nationwide.



## Zoning:

The [American Planning Association: Guide and Essential information on Planning and Zoning for Solar Energy](#) is a great resource for all solar-related zoning and planning issues, including case studies and guidance on setting goals, developing solar-friendly policies, and regulating solar energy development.

## Financial Incentives:

The [DSIRE Database](#) provides up-to-date information on clean energy incentives available from local governments and utilities across the country. For additional information, the [Maryland Energy Administration's solar webpage](#) provides information on policies, programs and incentives for solar energy in Maryland, including the [Clean Energy Grant Program](#). The Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) posts available rebates and tax credits on their [Energy Incentives Page](#).

## Local Solar Efforts:

Local governments in the metropolitan Washington DC area are working with the [Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments](#) to help residents and business in going solar via participation in the on the [U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative Rooftop Solar Challenge II](#). The Rooftop Solar Challenge helps make it easier and more affordable for Americans to go solar, reducing "soft costs" by streamlining permit processes, updating planning and zoning codes, improving standards for connecting solar power to the electric grid, and increasing access to financing.



You can learn more about your community's efforts to support local solar markets on the [Solar Roadmap](#), which benchmarks local governments' solar policies and programs against national best practices and provides a curated resource library to support goal achievement. The Solar Roadmap is part of the Rooftop Solar Challenge II.



[Solar Ready II](#) offers training programs on solar Best Management Practice dissemination and implementation, focusing on permitting, net metering and interconnection standards, financing options, and planning and zoning processes. You can view the full list of [Best Management Practices](#) online. Solar Ready II is part of the Rooftop Solar Challenge II.



## **General Resources**

The SunShot [Solar Outreach Partnership](#) (SolarOPs) is designed to help accelerate solar energy adoption on the local level by providing timely and actionable information to local governments. SolarOPs provides a mix of educational workshops, peer-to-peer sharing opportunities, research-based reports, and online resources. SolarOPs is part of the U.S. DOE SunShot Initiative.



[Solar Powering America](#) has hundreds of resources on solar energy for commercial, residential, rural, state and local government, financial, and workforce development audiences. Solar Powering America is an interagency initiative that coordinates federal efforts toward the President's Climate Action Plan solar energy goals.



[U.S. Department of Energy's Clean Energy Education Resources](#)  
[Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia Solar Energy Industries Association Webpage](#)

### **Bulk Purchasing:**

- [DC Solar United Neighborhoods \(DC SUN\)](#)
- [Maryland Solar United Neighborhoods \(MD SUN\)](#)
- [Virginia Solar United Neighborhoods \(VA SUN\)](#)

### **Workforce Development:**

- [Solar Energy Industries Association's \(SEIA\) Workforce Development Network](#)
- [Interstate Renewable Energy Council's \(IREC\) Clean Energy Workforce Education Network](#)

- [GRID Alternatives](#) – workforce development and volunteer opportunities

For more information on solar in the metropolitan Washington region, please contact Isabel Ricker at [iricker@mwkog.org](mailto:iricker@mwkog.org).