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Webinar Speakers

**Warren Leon**
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**Nate Hausman**
Project Director, Clean Energy States Alliance
Solar with Justice Webinar
January 29, 2020

Recommendations for State Governments

Warren Leon
Executive Director
Clean Energy States Alliance
What Makes the Report Different

1. A diverse team worked together to explore solar in under-resourced communities in a comprehensive manner

2. The report gathered the viewpoints of a large number of experts: 76 interviews with 82 people (plus interviews for case studies)

3. The views of leaders of community organizations were given special attention

4. The report makes clear recommendations

Kick-off workshop in Atlanta, January 2019
The Project Team

- Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA)
  - Nicole Hernandez Hammer
  - Nate Hausman
  - Warren Leon
  - Rob Sanders
  - Laura Schieb
- Jackson State University Department of Urban and Regional Planning
  - Berneece Herbert
- Partnership for Southern Equity
  - Chandra Farley
- Paulos Analysis
  - Ben Paulos
- University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability
  - Tony Reames
- The Nathan Cummings Foundation
  - Danielle Deane-Ryan
- The Solutions Project
  - Rudi Navarra
The Report’s Structure

Part One: Background
- Challenges under-resourced communities face and how solar can help
- Obstacles to solar for under-resourced communities
- The importance of community empowerment

Part Two: Recommendations
- General findings and recommendations
- Chapters for specific groups:
  - State governments
  - Philanthropic foundations
  - Community organizations
  - Other stakeholders (solar industry, municipalities, etc.)
- Changing project financing
Top Ten General Findings and Recommendations

1. Partnerships involving trusted community organizations are essential.
3. Installations for community institutions deserve special consideration.
4. Resilience should be a component of LMI solar.
5. Financial risk needs to be minimized for LMI households and community organizations.
6. Strong consumer protection is crucial.
7. Shared solar projects can play a useful role but they are not a panacea.
8. Training and workforce development should remain a priority.
9. Solar education is important.
10. Increasing the availability of financing for solar projects in under-resourced communities is essential.
Confusion over “community solar”
• Community solar vs. shared solar vs. locally controlled solar

Issues
• Some project developers not interested in recruiting LMI subscribers
• Low credit scores a barrier
• Can entail too much financial risk if withdrawal is difficult
• Does not necessarily achieve community empowerment

Ideal shared solar project
• Provide significant bill savings for LMI subscribers
• Nearly risk free for LMI subscribers
• Located within the subscribers’ community
• Organizations/residents have an active role in deciding on project siting and development

Useful strategy
• Anchor tenant

State or utility role
• Require LMI participation
• Offer special financial incentives
• Implement shared solar consumer protection measures
Nine Recommendations for State Governments

1. Measure progress towards energy equity
   • Good data makes it easier to have good programs
   • Questions
     • How are solar installations currently spread among different population groups?
     • Is progress being made in bringing all population segments into the solar economy?
     • Is a state program having the desired effect?
   • Approaches
     • California Energy Equity Indicators report
     • Collect information already compiled by research organizations and supplement with narrowly focused additional research
2. Make sure pro-solar state policies are in place

3. Adopt special incentives and policies
   - A positive policy environment for solar development is necessary but not sufficient
   - Possible approaches
     - Targeted grant or loan programs
     - Higher rebates or lower interest rates for LMI program participants
     - Incentives to attract solar companies, investors, or lenders to become active in under-resourced communities

4. Leverage private capital
   - Loan-loss reserve funds, loan guarantees, green banks, financial partnerships for bringing private capital into the LMI market
   - Not all projects in LMI communities require credit enhancement
5. Work with and help community organizations
   • Bring community representatives into the program design process
   • Provide community groups with training and funding to help them put together plans for solar projects
   • Provide funding for the resulting projects
   • See case study of Energy Trust of Oregon program

6. Bring LMI issues into public utility commission proceedings
   • Possibilities:
     • Require PUCs to integrate equity considerations into their proceedings
     • Include LMI provisions and programs as part of utilities’ integrated resource planning (IRP) processes
     • Support LMI solar through rate design
     • Overcome billing software and other administrative challenges
     • Integrate solar into existing utility rate discount programs for low-income customers
7. Design solar programs for specific market segments
   • No single program will reach all market segments
   • For most states, multifamily affordable housing an important segment that requires special strategies

Case study: Connecticut Green Bank’s program for LMI single-family homeowners

• Program elements
  • Employs a public-private partnership
  • Specifically serves LMI homeowners
  • Maximizes financial benefits for participants
  • Protects participants from financial risks
  • Supports solar contractors entering the LMI market

• Join a state working group on replicating the program model?
  • Contact Nate Hausman at nate@cleanegroup.org
8. Ensure financial benefits reach LMI households
   • Start by assessing how and to whom the financial benefits will flow
   • Put policies in place that ensure LMI benefits
     • Require solar companies to guarantee financial benefits to participate in a state program that includes special LMI incentives
     • Require affordable housing developments to provide tenant benefits as a condition for receiving state solar incentives
     • Avoid designing programs that reduce households’ HUD housing subsidies

9. Impose high consumer protection standards
   • CESA report: State Contract Disclosure Requirements
More State Initiatives to Replicate

1. California’s Solar on Multifamily Affordable Housing (SOMAH) program
2. Colorado’s inclusion of rooftop solar as an eligible measure for its Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)
3. Hawaii’s Green Energy Money Saver (GEMS) program
4. Illinois’ Solar for All program
5. Maryland’s Resiliency Hubs program
6. Massachusetts’s Solar Loan program
7. New Hampshire’s Low and Moderate Income Community Solar grant program
8. New York’s Solar for All program
We welcome your comments

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Thank you for attending our webinar

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• State of the U.S. Energy Storage Industry: 2019 Year in Review  
  Thursday, February 6, 2-3pm ET

• Soleil Lofts: The Largest Solar+Storage Virtual Power Plant in the Country  
  Wednesday, February 12, 1-2pm ET

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