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**Contacts:**

Warren Leon, wleon@cleanegroup.org, (978) 317-4559  
Chandra Farley, cfarley@psequity.org, (404) 538-6236  
Refugio Mata, refugio@resource-media.org, (805) 428-4075

## **In new “Solar with Justice” report, under-resourced communities confront inequalities in solar development**

*Research puts a spotlight on how solar projects can be deployed to bring economic benefits to communities with low and moderate incomes through government, philanthropic, and frontline organizational action*

MONTPELIER, VT – A new report takes an evaluative look at policies and projects across the country, including 11 case studies, and it draws out lessons learned to guide the implementation of solar in under-resourced communities to ensure long-term economic, equity, and public health benefits. Solar energy can reduce electricity costs and attract further investments, yet disadvantaged communities chronically lack access to the booming solar economy. Financing challenges, limited policy vehicles to support project development, and other obstacles put it out of reach of many working families. The *Solar with Justice: Strategies for Powering Up Under-Resourced Communities and Growing an Inclusive Solar Market* report – authored by a coalition of clean energy and environmental justice advocates, as well as academic and foundation partners – can be accessed at: <https://cesa.org/resource-library/resource/solar-with-justice>.

**The report looks at solar projects across the U.S. and shares detailed insights from experts, including recommendations to:**

- Minimize financial risks for low and moderate income (LMI) households: These households need guaranteed savings because they often do not have a cushion to withstand financial setbacks.
- Create partnerships with trusted community organizations: Local groups can best assess ways to meet community needs and actively engage.
- Increase financing options: Broad, effective funding is crucial to building out solar economies in underserved communities that lack financial resources.
- Bolster consumer protections: Leaders must provide education to ensure that LMI customers experience tangible benefits from solar.

The report offers detailed recommendations for community organizations, government entities, foundations, and the solar industry on practical approaches to place equity at the center of solar development. The case studies of model projects gathered from around the country also illustrate concrete actionable lessons learned that can be applied to solar development on a wider scale.

“Access to the benefits of a solar economy should be made available to everyone, not just a select few,” **said Chandra Farley, Just Energy Director of the Partnership for Southern Equity**. “But paying attention to the experiences and unique needs of under-resourced communities is critical to ensure projects are successful.”

“Solar development anchored in equity represents an opportunity to generate savings for families and affordable housing providers, and generate further investment,” **said Warren Leon, Executive Director of the Clean Energy States Alliance**. “Solar on buildings that house nonprofits can provide electricity bill savings that can be redirected to community-serving and mission-related activities.”

“The report zeroes in on how critical it is for foundations to prioritize an economic equity analysis not just in their grant-making, but also as they explore other financing mechanisms for inclusive solar development like mission related investing,” **said Danielle Deane-Ryan, Director of the Inclusive Clean Economy Program at The Nathan Cummings Foundation**. “It is vital to incorporate input from under-resourced communities.”

“Innovative solar projects focused on serving low-to-moderate income communities, especially people of color, will ensure that affordable, clean, and resilient energy is accessible to all,” **said Rudi Navarra, Director of Investments at The Solutions Project**. “Investors must recognize the social and market benefits. Communities that are most vulnerable to pollution, service disruption, and high electricity costs – from Native lands to urban areas to rural service territories – are able to determine their own energy fate.”

The *Solar with Justice* report gathered perspectives from more than 90 experts across industry. It is the first of its kind to assemble a diverse team to explore solar in under-resourced communities, focusing on the voices and insights from community organization leaders across the U.S., and presenting concrete, actionable recommendations.

The report was authored by a diverse project team that included the [Clean Energy States Alliance](#), [Jackson State University Department of Urban and Regional Planning](#), [Partnership for Southern Equity](#), [PaulosAnalysis](#), [University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability](#), the [Nathan Cummings Foundation](#), and [The Solutions Project](#).

The Clean Energy States Alliance will host a free webinar series highlighting the report's findings and recommendations, beginning with an overview webinar on December 12th. For more information or to register, visit: <https://cesa.org/about-us/member-news/newsitem/solar-with-justice-webinars>

Read the full report, and a Spanish version of the report's executive summary, at: <https://cesa.org/resource-library/resource/solar-with-justice>.

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