



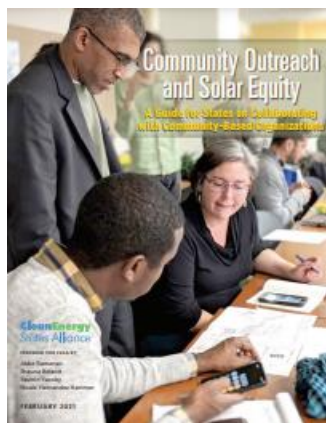
Working with Community-Based Organizations to Advance Solar for LMI and Disadvantaged Communities: Selected Resources for State Energy Agencies

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December 2023

Partnerships between states and community-based organizations (CBOs) are a key component of advancing energy justice. State governments will be most successful in implementing solar for low- and moderate-income (LMI) and disadvantaged communities if they work collaboratively with CBOs that understand—and are trusted in—those communities. When launching or expanding solar programs for those communities, targeted outreach to CBOs is crucial and should be done in ways that give CBOs meaningful input.

In this resource guide, the Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA) recommends four previously published resources that elaborate on what state energy agencies (SEAs) should consider when conducting stakeholder outreach and engaging with CBOs. The resources linked below are good starting points for exploring the SEA-CBO relationship. Each resource is briefly described to help states identify the resources most relevant to them.

These resources are relevant to all LMI solar programs, including programs launched under EPA's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund's Solar for All competition.



Community Outreach and Solar Equity: A Guide for States on Collaborating with Community-Based Organizations

Abbe Ramanan, Shauna Beland, Yasmin Yacoby, Nicole Hernandez Hammer | Clean Energy States Alliance
February 2021 | 42 Pages

This guide, produced by CESA, is aimed at SEAs that are looking to strengthen their relationships with local disadvantaged communities or are beginning to engage in energy justice work. The guide offers a collection of best practices, ideas, and principles that provide states a foundation for building equitable relationships with CBOs and for working with them on solar development. The guide covers the preliminary steps and the training that agencies can undertake prior to pursuing collaboration with CBOs, how to structure community engagement, and how to build long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships.



Investing in Relationships: Strategies State Agencies Can Use to Equitably Partner with Community Representatives

*Bayoán Ware and Lidia Garcia / Energy Trust of Oregon
Clean Energy States Alliance
May 2023 | 24 Pages*

This case study, produced by Energy Trust of Oregon and CESA as part of CESA's **Solar with Justice: Connecting States and Communities** project, is focused on Oregon but is applicable to all states.

The case study analyzes six programs delivered by **Energy Trust of Oregon** (ETO) that have shown success in building meaningful and impactful relationships with community representatives. It profiles the programs listed below and highlights essential best practices for community engagement. These programs can serve as a model for other state agencies seeking to develop relationships with community partners in order to better meet their shared goals.

- **Diversity Advisory Council:** This council provides advice to ETO and is made up of external stakeholders who represent underserved communities within ETO's service territory.
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan Engagement:** ETO staff organized seven engagement sessions with CBOs that serve BIPOC households and businesses, rural populations, and low-income individuals to get input on draft metrics to be used in finalizing a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan.
- **Community Partner Funding Program:** This program provides CBOs with capacity building and administrative resources. This is in addition to the funds CBOs receive to administer programs that provide energy-efficient upgrades and services.
- **Working Together Grant Program:** These grants are a relationship development tool to help CBOs and ETO better serve their overlapping customers and communities.
- **Solar Ambassador Pilot Project:** Solar Ambassadors are community members from the communities served by seven CBOs. They strengthen awareness and understanding of solar in their communities through community education and by providing one-on-one support to homeowners interested in solar.
- **Community Based Liaison Network:** This is a network of professionals from communities that ETO has historically underserved who offer feedback and insight during initial stages of project development, provide guidance on effective outreach, and foster healthy relationships by engaging these communities.

Importantly, compensation was provided for community representatives engaged in these programs. The case study concludes by highlighting five steps to partner with community representatives:

1. Identify the problem or area of need with community representatives
2. Conduct preliminary research on appropriate compensation levels for community representatives
3. Brainstorm small solutions with community representatives
4. Conduct a pilot project with community representatives
5. Assess and iterate with community representatives to improve the project.



Comprehensive Building Blocks for a Regenerative & Just 100% Policy

The 100% Network | January 2020 | 92 pages

This paper, developed by the 100% Network, a national network of frontline communities, environmental groups, and intermediary organizations invested in advancing a transition to a 100% clean, regenerative, equitable, and just energy future, presents a comprehensive approach to achieving 100% regenerative policy that is centered on environmental justice.

While this paper covers many facets of a 100% just and regenerative energy transition beyond just engaging with frontline communities and CBOs, the paper has one section, starting on page 68, titled “Building Blocks for Public Participation and Governance”. The following recommendations from that section are elaborated upon in the report:

- Collaborate with frontline communities and CBOs during policy development and program implementation
- Consult with Tribal nations and their leadership
- Ensure full accessibility to public hearings
- Provide public funds for “intervenor” for costs and fees of regulatory proceedings
- Program delivery should be led by BIPOC and impacted communities
- Require clear outreach metrics
- Provide legal and technical capacity support for BIPOC and impacted communities

The recommendations relating to governance and oversight include:

- Form oversight boards and technical advisory groups led by BIPOC and frontline communities
- Center BIPOC and frontline communities in appointment processes
- Establish participatory budgeting and implementation processes



Community Engagement Toolkit: Building Purpose and Participation

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
68 pages

This toolkit was developed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide HUD grantees additional information to meet the requirements of a Citizen Participation Plan. HUD grantees are required to develop and follow a Citizen Participation Plan that summarizes how the grantee will engage the public when using HUD Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD) funds.

The basic requirements of the Citizen Participation Plan include the following:

- Description of the public participation process, including public hearings and public comment periods
- Ensured opportunities for involvement of affected persons and other concerned citizens in the planning process
- Transparency of the planning process and freedom of access to the Plan
- Definition of amendment thresholds for HUD CPD grants
- Instructions to guide the public's submission of comments and the standards for the grantee's response
- Participant and community engagement and participation throughout all stages of the Plan's development

Although this toolkit was designed for HUD grantees, the information, recommendations, and activities can be incorporated into public outreach by SEAs that are working on solar community outreach.

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About the Solar Energy Technologies Office

The U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office accelerates the advancement and deployment of solar technology in support of

an equitable transition to a decarbonized economy. Learn more at energy.gov/eere/solar.

