

SOLAR *in Your Community* CHALLENGE



Solar in Your Community Challenge

The Solar in Your Community Challenge is a \$5 million prize competition funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office that aims to expand solar electricity access to low- and moderate-income (LMI) households and community organizations that haven't been able to take advantage of the booming solar market. Because of rooftop limitations, lack of a strong credit history, or inability to utilize tax incentives, over 50% of Americans don't have access to solar electricity. Offering \$5 million in cash prizes and technical assistance over 18 months, the challenge supports teams across the country as they develop and demonstrate replicable projects or programs that expand solar access to underserved groups.

How to Participate

There are two types of participants in the challenge: **teams** and **experts**.

Teams

Teams can include a wide array of organizations like local government entities, businesses, nonprofits, community serving organizations, utilities, banks, and citizen associations. Teams work together to either create either a portfolio of **projects** or a new **program**.

While both project-teams and program-teams will pursue initiatives that unlock solar access, their approaches differ.

- **Project teams** work to create a series of projects that benefit LMI households, nonprofit, and governmental organizations. Projects should be demonstrations of innovative business or financial models that have the potential to scale up.
- **Program teams** create new solar programs that enable or incentivize the creation of the types of projects listed above. Program teams should be led by an institution with access to funding, like state, local, or tribal governments, utilities, or financial institutions.

Experts

Experts provide technical assistance to teams throughout the challenge. These experts can either be a **consultant** or a **coach**. Both coaches and consultants will be compensated for their efforts.

- **Consultants:** Serve as a subject matter experts, providing resources and specialized assistance to teams as they implement their projects or programs. Areas of expertise that are of interest include finance, law, regulations, community engagement, and solar program design.
- **Coaches:** Help teams meet performance goals, connect to other teams, and stay on track throughout the challenge.

How it Works

Competing teams will design and deploy new and scalable business and financial models through the demonstration of solar projects and programs in their communities. These projects must directly benefit LMI households, with at least 20% of the energy and benefits assigned to LMI households or 60% of the energy and benefits going to community-serving nonprofits, or state, local, or tribal governments. Portfolios of solar systems must be completed during the 18-month performance period and should aggregate to be between 25 kilowatts and 5 megawatts in size.

Teams should keep in mind a project or program's ability for scale-up during their planning. Teams with plans for long-term impact and replicable project or program models will be preferred over one-time only projects. Only projects and programs that can be developed under existing laws and regulations will be eligible.

Award Category	Total DOE Funds	Est. # of Winners	Timeline
Seeds Awards	\$2 million	50 teams	Early application deadline: January 6, 2017 Regular deadline: March 17, 2017
Technical Assistance	\$2 million	Up to 100 teams	Early application deadline: January 6, 2017 Regular deadline: March 17, 2017
Final Prizes	\$1 million	Up to 5 teams	January 2019

Seed Awards (\$2M)

After applying for the Solar in Your Community Challenge, DOE will select approximately 50 teams to receive up to \$60,000 in cash prizes each. Eligibility will be determined based on the potential reach of the project or program, especially how much the proposed work will benefit LMI community members. After being deemed eligible for a given prize amount, a team will receive these seed awards as they complete key milestones that display tangible progress.

Technical Assistance (\$2M)

DOE will provide up to 100 participating teams—both winners of seed awards, as well as others—with \$10,000 vouchers for technical assistance from qualified experts, as referenced above. Teams will use their vouchers in an online marketplace and select qualified consultants for specialized one-on-one assistance to help them work towards their goals.

In addition to the technical assistance vouchers, all competing teams will have access to general resources, including toolkits, reports, guides, and webinars that will assist them with their project and program implementation. Teams will also be provided peer-to-peer networking and learning opportunities throughout the duration of the challenge.

Period of Performance

From May 1, 2017 to October 31, 2018, teams will build and complete their projects and programs.

Final Prizes (\$1M)

All participating teams will compete to win \$1 million in final prizes. Based on replicability and impact, a panel of experts will select one team to receive a \$500,000 grand prize, another to win a \$200,000 second place prize, and three others to receive \$100,000 in final prizes.

How to Apply

All interested parties should first register on the website www.solarinyourcommunity.org. After completing a profile, entities can access the applications, which include:

- Teams: A three-page written application, short video, and a public facing description.
- Consultants: A list of the products and services they can offer, the price breakdown for using these services, as well as case studies, photos, and other supporting materials.
- Coaches: A one-page narrative about why they want to be a coach and their relevant experiences and at least one letter of recommendation. ■

Learn more and apply early by January 6, 2017, or by the regular deadline of March 17, 2017 at www.solarinyourcommunity.org.