



# National Community Solar Partnership

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Sunny Awards for Equitable Community Solar  
August 18, 2022 | 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. (Eastern)

# Housekeeping

- This session **is** being recorded.
- Please put questions in the Q&A section (please do not put questions in the chat).
- Questions will be answered at the end of the webinar.
- Live transcript is enabled. It must be turned on manually by clicking on the “Live Transcript” button and selecting “Show Subtitles.”

# Agenda

Time	Topic	Presenter
3:00 p.m.	Welcome & NCSP Overview	Nicole Steele, DOE
3:10 p.m.	Sunny Awards for Equitable Community Solar Overview	Julia Ostapiej, DOE
3:15 p.m.	Sunny Awards Application Overview	Ben Burch, DOE
3:45 p.m.	Q&A	Anna Balzer, NCSP
4:00 p.m.	Wrap Up & Next Steps	Anna Balzer, NCSP



# National Community Solar Partnership Overview

# National Community Solar Partnership



## Data Tracking

Sharing the Sun is an annual report, published by NREL, that tracks market trends in community solar.



## Collaboration

Partners can access an online community platform, virtual/in-person meetings, webinars and other tools to engage with DOE, National Labs, and each other.



## Technical Assistance

Partners have access to resources and direct technical assistance from DOE, National Labs, and third-party subject-matter experts to support local challenges.



National Community Solar Partnership (NCSP)

# Pathway to Success

TECHNICAL  
EXPERTISE  
AND CAPACITY  
BUILDING



STATE  
ENGAGEMENT



ACCESS  
TO CAPITAL



CUSTOMER  
ENGAGEMENT



HEARTS  
AND MINDS



**NCSP  
TARGET**

5 million households  
and \$1 billion  
in savings

**Resulting in...**

- ★ An average 20% energy bill reduction
- ★ 700% increase in community solar capacity
- ★ Meaningful benefits such as resilience, career opportunities, and community wealth building

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS | STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT | DEVELOPERS | LENDERS | PHILANTHROPISTS | UTILITIES | CUSTOMERS

# Meaningful Benefits of Community Solar

## Greater Household Savings



Provide at least 20% reduction in electricity bills for residential subscribers to a project

## Low Income Access



Include at least 40% subscribers from low- to moderate-income (LMI) households

## Resilience & Grid Benefits



Include capability to deliver power to households and/or critical facilities during a grid outage or strengthen grid operations through demand response and other actions

## Community Ownership



Include community ownership of, or equity in, project assets (e.g., community benefits agreements or partnership flip models)

## Equitable Workforce Development



Advance high wages, reduce demographic income disparities, ensure a trained and available workforce reflective of the community, and creating a safe work environment



# Sunny Awards for Equitable Community Solar Overview



# Sunny Awards Overview

## Prize Purpose

- Recognize community solar projects and programs that employ or develop best practices to increase equitable access to the meaningful benefits of community solar

## Meaningful Benefits Categories

- Greater Household Savings
- Low- to Moderate-income Household Access
- Resilience and Grid Benefits
- Community Ownership
- Equitable Workforce Development
- *Innovation Category*: Community Engagement
- *Innovation Category*: Impact

## Eligibility

- Community solar project or program based in the United States or its territories
- Provides at least one of the 5 primary meaningful benefits
- Project must have been energized for at least 6 months or program must support at least one project that has been energized for 6 months
- Serves at least some residential customers
- No size requirements

## DEADLINE:

Applications are due on **October 7, 2022, 5pm ET**

# Sunny Awards Prizes



Finalist Prize  
\$1,000

- Up to 50 awards
- Meet eligibility requirements in **at least one** category
- Announced in November 2022



Grand Prize  
\$10,000

- Up to 5 awards
- Meet eligibility requirements in **at least two** categories
- Announced at the NCSP Annual Summit in January 2023

# Non-Monetary Special Recognition

## Semifinalist Recognition

- Public announcement and recognized on NCSP website
- No limit to number of projects or programs recognized
- Meet eligibility requirements in **at least one** category
- Announced in October 2022

## Meaningful Benefits Category Special Recognition

- Publicly recognized at NCSP Annual Summit, featured in webinars and other NCSP media, recognized on NCSP website
- Up to 21 projects and programs recognized
- Meet eligibility requirements in **at least one category**
- Announced at the NCSP Annual Summit in January 2023

# Review and Scoring

## Reviewers

- Semifinalist Recognition -> *Internal DOE Reviewers*
- Finalist Recognition + Prizes -> *Internal DOE Reviewers*
- Meaningful Benefits Category Special Recognition -> *Panel of Expert External Reviewers*
- Sunny Grand Prize Awards -> *Panel of Expert External Reviewers*

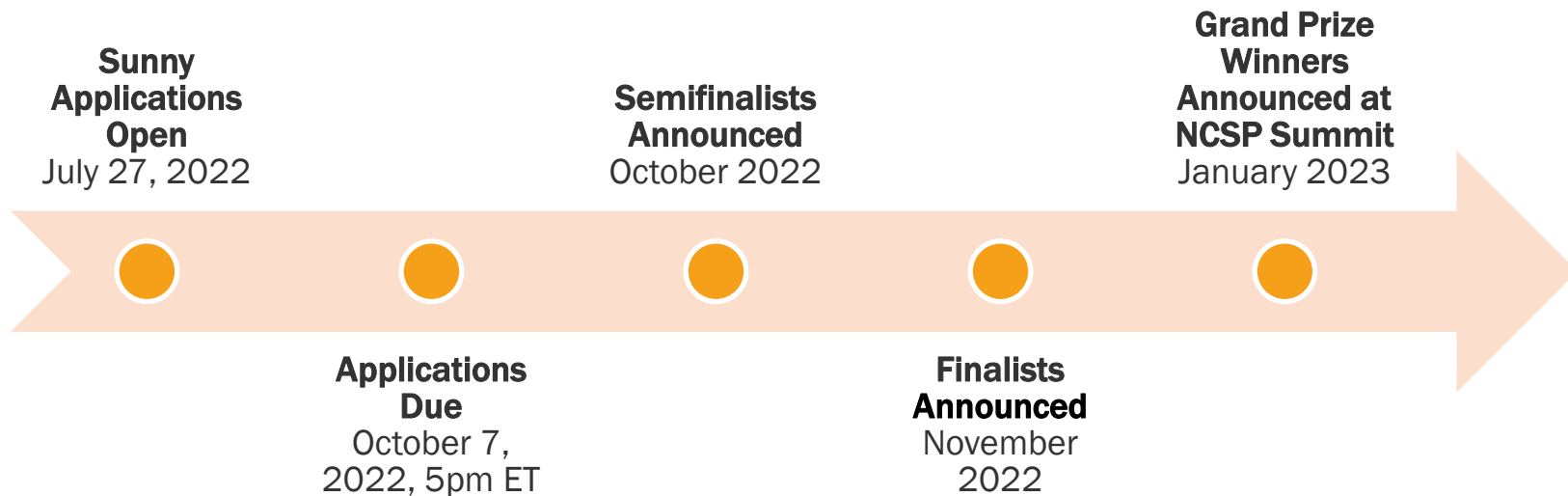
## Evidence

- Evidence will be reviewed first – must be appropriate, complete, and verifiable
- Suggested evidence preferred, but encourage highest quality evidence available

## Scoring

- Each narrative and evidence section given a score between 1 – 6
- High quality evidence will be given a higher score (4-6) than low quality (1-3)
- Reviewer comments taken into consideration
- May follow up with applicants as needed

# Application Timeline





# Sunny Awards Application Process

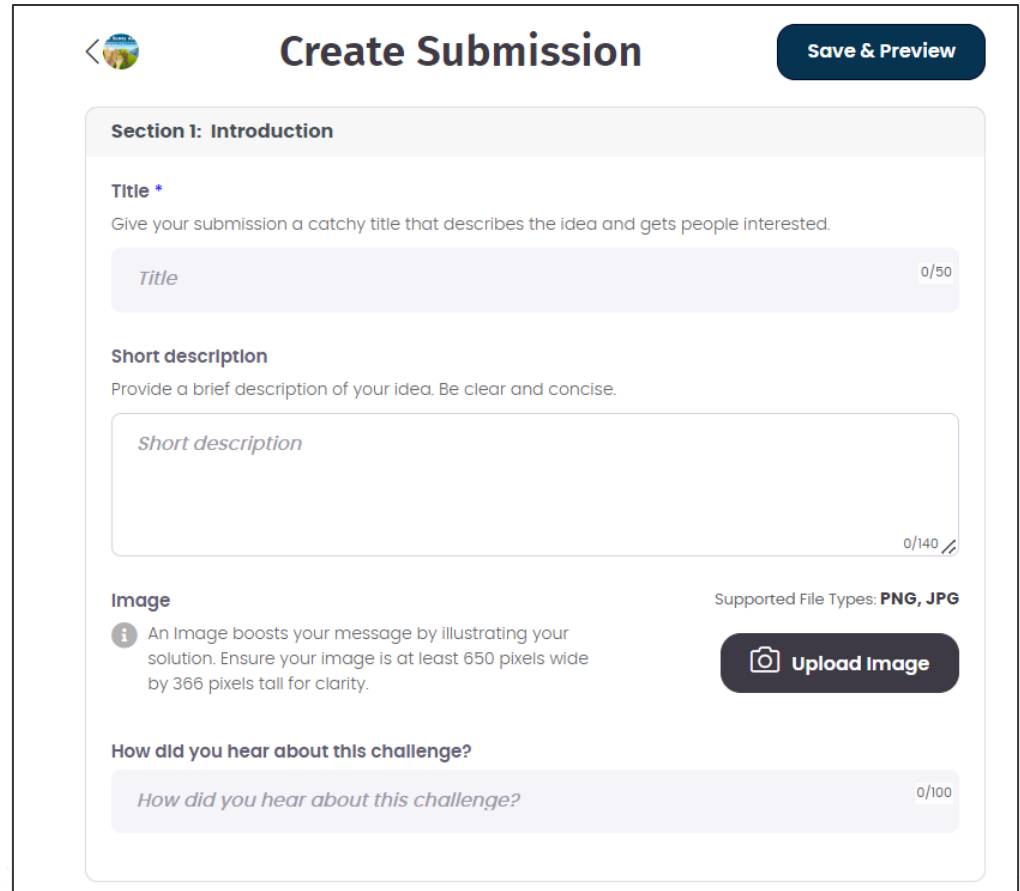
# HeroX Platform Overview

HeroX  
Live  
Demo

The screenshot displays the HeroX platform interface for the 'The Sunny Awards' challenge. At the top, the 'AMERICAN MADE CHALLENGES' logo is visible. The challenge title 'The Sunny Awards FOR EQUITABLE COMMUNITY SOLAR' is prominently displayed in a blue banner over an illustration of hands holding a star award and solar panels. To the right, the challenge details are shown: '1,009' views, 'Share' and 'Follow (38)' buttons, and a description: 'Recognize community solar projects and programs that increase equitable access to the meaningful benefits of community solar.' Below the description are two category tags: 'Energy, Environment & Resources' and 'Government'. The challenge stage is 'Enter' with a prize of '\$100,000'. A large blue button labeled 'SOLVE THIS CHALLENGE' is positioned below the details. At the bottom, a navigation menu includes 'Overview' (underlined), 'Guidelines', 'Timeline', 'Updates' (with a '2' notification bubble), 'Forum', 'Teams' (with a '38' notification bubble), 'Entries', 'Resources', and 'FAQ'. The bottom of the page features a yellow banner with the text 'NATIONAL COMMUNITY SOLAR PARTNERSHIP | U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY' and the page number '15'.

# Introduction

- Public information
- Create a name highlighting the project/program
- Short description may be used in NCSP communications
- Photograph of the project/program



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Create Submission" with a "Save & Preview" button in the top right. The form is divided into sections:

- Section 1: Introduction**
  - Title \***: A text input field with the placeholder "Title" and a character count of "0/50". Below it is the instruction: "Give your submission a catchy title that describes the idea and gets people interested."
  - Short description**: A larger text area with the placeholder "Short description" and a character count of "0/140". Below it is the instruction: "Provide a brief description of your idea. Be clear and concise."
  - Image**: A section with an information icon and the text: "An Image boosts your message by illustrating your solution. Ensure your image is at least 650 pixels wide by 366 pixels tall for clarity." To the right, it says "Supported File Types: PNG, JPG" and features a dark blue "Upload Image" button with a camera icon.
  - How did you hear about this challenge?**: A text input field with the placeholder "How did you hear about this challenge?" and a character count of "0/100".



# Eligibility

- You must answer every question to be eligible
- Team Lead should complete this section

**Digital Signature \***  
Please Enter your full legal name

*Digital Signature* 0/3000


In particular, by entering, I represent and warrant that: The competitor is the sole, original author and copyright owner of the submission or that the applicant has acquired sufficient rights to use and to authorize others, including DOE, to use the submission, as specified throughout the rules; that the submission does not infringe upon any copyright, trade secret, trade mark, non-disclosure agreement, patent, or upon any other third-party rights; and that the submission is free of malware. \*

Select agree or disagree. Please note that selecting "I disagree" will make your submission ineligible for the American-Made Challenges prize competition.

I agree  
 I disagree

**Section 2: Eligibility**

Submit as a team

 **Anna Balzer's team**  
This submission will be connected to your team.

**Section 3: Eligibility Acknowledgement**

Does this community solar project or program meet the DOE definition of community solar? \*

'A solar project or purchasing program, within a geographic area, in which the benefits of a solar project flow to multiple customers such as individuals, businesses, nonprofits, and other groups.'

Yes  
 No

Is this community solar project or program based in the United States or its territories? \*

Yes  
 No

Has this community solar project been energized for at least 6 months or does the community solar program include at least one community solar project that has been energized for at least 6 months? \*

Yes  
 No

I confirm that I am submitting as either (select one): \*

Please confirm that your submission meets the eligibility requirements stated in the official rules

a representative of a private entity, such as corporation or other organization that is incorporated in and maintain a primary place of business in the United States;  
 an individual or group of individuals who are legal residents of the United States.

# Cover Page

- Submitting as a Team vs Individual
- Submitting as a Project vs Program

### Section 4: Cover Page Information

**Are you competing as a Team or as an Individual Entity? \***

Team Requirements:  
Competitors planning to participate as a team must meet the following requirements:

1. A team must have a single legal entity representing the entire team. This entity shall be designated the Team Lead. The Team Lead is responsible for complying with all the rules of this prize challenge including coordinating with its team members, resolving any conflicts, working with DOE and its prize administrator, responsibly allocating resources, submitting all required materials, and complying with all guidance and restrictions.
2. Any cash prizes awarded will be sent to the Team Lead. The Team Lead will be responsible for distributing any cash prize among project or program team members. The DOE is not responsible for resolving any disputes among team members.
3. For project-focused teams only, we encourage the Team to include and prioritize funds for the project's community partner.
4. For program-focused teams only, the Team Lead must be an electric utility, an electric co-operative, municipal power company, or a state, local or tribal government entity.

The Team Lead must be able to receive payments that are legally made from the U.S. in U.S. dollars or designate a team member that can.

Competing as a Team

Competing as an Individual Entity

**Are you Nominating a Community Solar Project or Program \***  
(ADD TEXT)

Community Solar Project

Community Solar Program

**Community solar project or program name (Public) \***

Community solar project or program name (Public) 0/5000

**Date when the program was launched or the project was energized and fully operational \***  
Note: that projects must be energized and subscribed for at least 6 months to be eligible. Programs must have had at least one project energized and subscribed for at least 6 months to be eligible.

Date when the program was launched or the project was energized and fully operc

**Project's City and State (Public) \***

Enter location

**Project's 9-Digit Zip Code \***

Project's 9-Digit Zip Code 0/5000

**Project or program size (kW or MW capacity) \***

Project or program size (kW or MW capacity) 0/5000

# Cover Page (continued)

- Each Meaningful Benefit selected will require more information later in the application
  - Expect to submit evidence/narrative for each benefit selected
- The legal name of the organization receiving the award must match W-9

**Which "Meaningful Benefits" Apply to your Submission? \***

Select all categories that apply.

- 1. Greater Household Savings
- 2. LMI Household Access
- 3. Resilience and Grid Benefits
- 4. Community Ownership
- 5. Equitable Workforce Development
- 6. Innovation Category: Community Engagement
- 7. Innovation Category: Innovation in Impact

**If you receive a cash award for the Sunny Awards, who will receive the award? \***

Please enter the legal name of the individual or entity you wish to receive the full award payment. This should match the name in Line 1 of a W-9 Form exactly. This is not binding, and you can change the recipient at the time of winning the prize. Please note, any changes may delay payment and require additional documentation for auditing purposes internal to NREL.

*If you receive a cash award for the Sunny Awards, who will receive the award? \** 0/3000

# Narrative

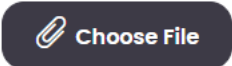
- Please use the Narrative Template (follow [link](#))
- Background narrative (300-word max)
- One narrative per Meaningful Benefit Selected (300-word max each)
- Submit as a single PDF

**Section 4: Submission Package: Narrative**

**Narrative \***

Narrative describing the project or program and how it delivers the community solar benefits described in this document (300 words per category/not to exceed 2,400 words) - <https://www.herox.com/sunnyawards/resource/1035>

Supported File Types: **PDF**

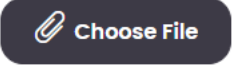
 Choose File

# Evidence

- ALL projects and programs must submit general supporting documentation as single PDF

**Section 5: Submission Package: General Supporting Documentation**  
Required for all submissions. Project photo, video, or program materials, including supporting evidence for benefits provided.

**General Supporting Materials: Document Upload \*** Supported File Types: PDF

Please upload:  
(Program Only) Official program materials or guidance 

(Project Only) Documentation of permission to operate from utility or registration of facility RECs

**General Supporting Materials: Link to Additional Photos**  
If including photos along with your submission, please link to a online shared folder with .jpeg files of your photos.

*General Supporting Materials: Link to Additional Photos* 0/3000

**General Supporting Materials: Link to Video**  
If including a video along with your submission, please link to the video online.

*General Supporting Materials: Link to Video* 0/3000

# Evidence (Cont.)

- Provide evidence for each of the meaningful benefits selected
- Guidance on suggested materials found on Official Sunny Rules, pages 19-23
- Send questions to [solar.prize@nrel.gov](mailto:solar.prize@nrel.gov)

## Section 8: Submission Package: Supporting Materials


Each submission must complete at least one of the seven categories below to be eligible. In addition to this narrative, competitors will need to provide evidence to support their statements on the benefits they are providing. Details on supporting evidence can be found in Section 5. (300 word maximum per category)

Upload supporting materials for only the "Meaningful Benefit" categories for which you are applying.

### Supporting Materials (Category 1): Greater Household Savings

Supported File Types: PDF

Criteria: Project or program must reduce the electricity bills of residential subscribers by at least 20% on average over the course of a year.


 Choose File

Combine multiple documents into a single .PDF file for upload. See official rules for specific instructions.

### Supporting Materials (Category 2): Low- to Moderate-Income Household Access

Supported File Types: PDF

Criteria: At least 40% of the residential subscribers to a community solar project or program are LMI households.


 Choose File

Combine multiple documents into a single .PDF file for upload. See official rules for specific instructions.

### Supporting Materials (Category 3): Resilience & Grid Benefits

Supported File Types: PDF

Criteria: The community solar project or program includes some form of battery storage, microgrid capabilities, or demand response feature that can provide power during an outage or otherwise contribute to fewer outages on a local grid.


 Choose File

Combine multiple documents into a single .PDF file for upload. See official rules for specific instructions.

### Supporting Materials (Category 4): Community Ownership

Supported File Types: PDF

Criteria: Local community members, subscribers, or local community organizations that provide services to a community-owned facility or have equity in the community solar project (including partnership flip models where ownership will be transferred after tax equity is realized) or the project includes other wealth-building strategies such as community benefits agreements.

 Choose File



# Q&A

# Stay Connected!

Nominate a project or program for a Sunny Award!  
<https://www.herox.com/sunnyawards>

Sign up for our [online community platform](#) for updates and future events!

Questions about the Sunny Awards? Reach out to us at [solar.prize@nrel.gov](mailto:solar.prize@nrel.gov)

## Low Income Community Solar Subscription Platform RFI

- Online platform to identify and make community solar subscriptions with verified savings more accessible for households participating in government-run low-income support programs.
- [Respond to Request for Information](#) (RFI) by August 31, 2022

## NCSP Annual Summit

- Tentatively scheduled for January 2023 – join the Partnership to get updates!

Join NCSP! [ncsp.solarinyourcommunity.org](https://ncsp.solarinyourcommunity.org)

Connect with Us: [community.solar@ee.doe.gov](mailto:community.solar@ee.doe.gov)



# Resources + Follow Up

Links to resources shared during Sunny Awards for Equitable Community Solar Webinar:

# NOTES – APPLICATION MATERIALS

- Cover Page (public)
- Narrative (not public) – note word counts
- Evidence (not public) – note no PII, upload as a single PDF, all projects must include general supporting evidence
- Additional Supporting Documentation (not public) – up to 5 pages of supporting documentation, single PDF

# NOTES – GENERAL APPLICATION

Be sure we include in this section:

- Project vs. program
- Individual vs. team
- Team requirements
- How many submissions can you enter (up to 3 projects – only the first received for an individual project is counted; 1 program only)