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**Introduction to SolSmart  
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# Acknowledgment and Disclaimer

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# IREC advances a 100% clean energy future through three complementary pathways.

## Workforce Development

IREC leads efforts to grow a diverse and qualified clean energy workforce by implementing strategies that unite stakeholders to improve recruitment, education, training, and job placement outcomes.

## Local Clean Energy Solutions

IREC helps cities, counties, and towns use policy tools and resources to drive the growth of clean energy, address climate change, and create new jobs.

## Regulatory Engagement

IREC is a national leader in regulatory policies that advance the growth of distributed energy resources, such as rooftop solar and energy storage.

# About SEIA

*Building a strong solar industry to power America*



Federal, State &  
Local Policy



Climate and  
Equity



Managing  
Growth



Trade, Technology  
and Manufacturing

# Intro to SolSmart

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## What is it?

SolSmart is a national designation and technical assistance program that has helped over 450 local governments make it faster, easier, and more affordable for residents and businesses to go solar.

## A SolSmart designation:

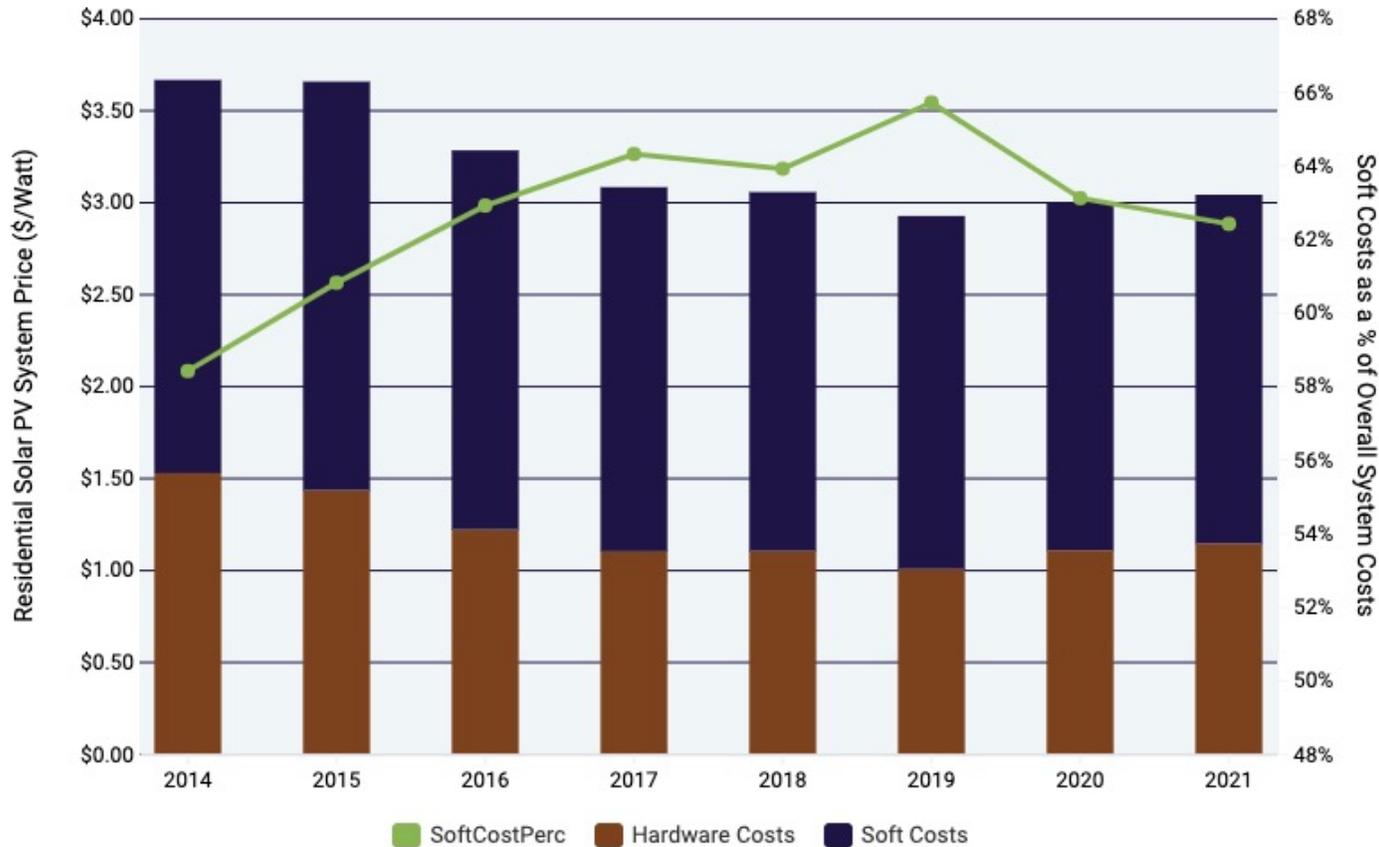
- Recognizes communities that have taken key steps to address local barriers to solar energy and foster the growth of mature local solar markets.
- Signals to residents and businesses that a community has taken the steps necessary to allow for greater solar adoption

Bronze, Silver, and Gold Designation Levels



# What is SolSmart's Role in Solar Development?

## Residential Solar PV System Pricing



SolSmart helps local governments remove barriers to solar energy growth and make it easier for residents and businesses to go solar

The program offers best practice and guidance that help communities become national solar energy leaders

SolSmart helps communities reduce “soft costs” — the costs of solar development that are unrelated to hardware

- Local permitting, zoning, and inspection requirements are an example of soft costs. Making these requirements less burdensome can encourage solar energy development.

Source: SEIA/Wood Mackenzie Power & Renewables U.S. Solar Market Insight 2021 Year in Review



# Designation Structure

To receive designation, communities must complete the following:



## Complete 3 prerequisites

20 points in Permitting & Inspection  
20 points in Planning & Zoning

60 total points



## Attain SolSmart Bronze and

Complete 2 Silver prerequisites

100 total points



## Attain SolSmart Silver and

Complete 2 Gold prerequisites

200 total points



# Core Competencies: Criteria and Designation

- 75 unique credits in 5 different categories that promote best practices to help local governments improve their solar markets
- Each credit has a corresponding point value ranging from 5 to 20
- Foundational Categories:
  - Permitting and Inspection
  - Planning and Zoning
- Special Focus Categories:
  - Government Operations
  - Community Engagement
  - Market Development

**"The SolSmart program created a national benchmark for communities to reach and provided the guidance and resources to support adoption of best practices in solar policy."**— Maurice Jones, City Manager, Charlottesville, Virginia



# The SolSmart Designation Process



# Technical Assistance

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- SolSmart technical assistance providers work with elected officials, local government staff, and community members to help communities update processes using established best practices
- The technical assistance is funded by SolSmart, and there is no cost to the community
  - Communities must commit staff time to working toward SolSmart designation
  - Communities must demonstrate a commitment to achieving designation
- Delivery of technical assistance can be tailored to fit the community needs
  - Online – resource library, email, webinars, templates
  - Phone – conference calls
  - In person – site visits, technical workshops



# Technical Assistance Guides, Templates, and Resources

The SolSmart program has an extensive resource library to make the designation process as easy as possible for communities.

- The updated [program guide](#) walks through each credit of the SolSmart designation criteria. The program guide has links to templates and other resources directly relevant to each credit.
- More in-depth resources can be found on the [SolSmart Resources](#) page. Here you'll find webinars and issue briefs tagged with the specific criteria they address.
- Within the resources are several training webinars specific to the SolSmart credits. These are free and available to anyone.

The screenshot shows the SolSmart website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the SolSmart logo, links for 'HOW WE HELP', 'OUR DESIGNEES', 'RESOURCES', 'NEWS', and a 'GET STARTED' button. A search icon is also present. The main content area features a dark blue header with the title 'SOLSMART WEBINAR: PERMITTING & INSPECTION REFRESHER TRAINING' and the presenter 'SolSmart; Bill Brooks, P.E.; The Solar Foundation'. Below this is a video player thumbnail for the webinar, dated 09/23/2020, with social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, and Email. To the right of the video, there is a section titled 'Permitting and Inspection' with a description of the webinar's purpose. Below that is a 'Related Criteria' section listing two criteria: PI-3 and PI-4. A 'VIEW RECORDED WEBINAR' button is located at the bottom of the content area. The footer includes a 'JOIN OUR MAILING LIST' input field, a 'GET STARTED | CONTACT' link, and social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.



# Key Accomplishments: SolSmart by the Numbers

- 43 states + District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands
- Represents 107 million people (over 1 in 4 U.S. residents)
- Regional Organization Pathway: 13 Designated Regional Organizations
- Communities receiving TA in 2021: Over 140



173



117



176



## SolSmart in Maine

Topsham, Maine is the state's first SolSmart designee, receiving Bronze designation on March 22, 2022.

**Congratulations Topsham!!**



# A Measurable Impact on Solar Energy Growth

- A formal evaluation of SolSmart was published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* in March 2022. Key findings:
  - SolSmart participation can lead to **increased local solar capacity of 18-19% per month.**
  - SolSmart communities **increased installations by 17% per month.**
  - Nearly all local government officials surveyed (98%) said that SolSmart **increased their knowledge of solar energy.** A majority also said it **reduced permitting and inspection timelines** and increased solar capacity.

*The study found that SolSmart “achieved its intended outcome to promote solar adoption in local communities.”*



# Thank You



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