

Solar APP+ Prize Competition

PCFO IGAP Funding Opportunity Snapshot

September 16, 2022

<u>Agency:</u> US Department of Energy (DOE)	<u>Bureau:</u> Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO)
<u>Application Deadline:</u> November 4, 2022	<u>Max Award:</u> \$15,000

Description

The SolarAPP+ Prize is a \$1 million program designed to accelerate the adoption of Solar Automated Permit Processing Plus (SolarAPP+). SolarAPP+ is an automated permitting software tool that provides instant permit approval on code-compliant residential rooftop solar systems. SolarAPP+ has been adopted by dozens of Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJs). For local governments that have adopted SolarAPP+, projects are permitted and inspected about two weeks faster than average, saving time for employees. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO) will award prizes of \$15,000 to local governments that successfully adopt or pilot SolarAPP+ in about five months. The prize funding will help local governments lower the cost of the adoption process.

Eligible Recipients

This prize is open to all governmental entities or authorities having jurisdiction (AHJs) that have authority over residential rooftop solar photovoltaic permitting. Examples include counties, cities, and any incorporated towns or villages in the United States. The SolarAPP+ Prize submission can be provided by any division of an AHJ, such as:

- Building, planning, or zoning department
- Office of Community Development
- Office of Economic Development
- Inspections
- Permitting
- Plan Check
- Sustainability
- Other

Matching Grant Requirements

None

Eligible Projects

Only submissions relevant to the goals of this program are eligible to compete. NREL will review all submissions to ensure that the following statements are true:

- The submission is provided by an authorized representative from an authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) or local government within the United States.
- The submission relates to adopting SolarAPP+ for solar photovoltaic permitting of residential systems.

Competition Timeline:

- **Step 1 (Submissions) - Due November 4, 2022:** Eligible AHJs will answer a questionnaire and upload a letter of support to demonstrate their intent to adopt SolarAPP+, the impact it would have on their solar permitting process, and their demonstrated need for the product and the SolarAPP+ Prize.
 - Eligible competitors are expected to be announced in late November 2022.
 - **Step 2 (SolarAPP+ Adoption) - Due April 27, 2023:** Selected AHJ competitors will submit proof of SolarAPP+ adoption by demonstrating that the SolarAPP+ pilot has begun by the final submission deadline in order to receive a \$15,000 cash prize award. NREL will provide selected AHJ competitors with technical assistance for adoption of the SolarAPP+ tool throughout the prize period.
 - Winners are expected to be announced in May 2023.
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New or Existing Program

New program

Tips for Being Competitive

The Merit Review Criteria for Step 1 applicants includes:

Solar Permit Volume

- The competitor shows significant solar permitting volume or opportunities for growth that SolarAPP+ could help address (expected solar volume >60 permits per year by 2024).
- The competitor has provided evidence that three or more contractors apply for permits annually within the AHJ.

Code Eligibility

- The competitor shows that they are code-compatible, or will be compatible with SolarAPP+ during the prize period (NEC 2017, NEC 2020, IRC 2018, IRC 2021, IBC 2018, IBC 2021).
- The competitor has not adopted local amendments to the model codes that they have implemented, such that minimal or no modifications to SolarAPP+ would be required.
- If the AHJ has adopted a local amendment to the model codes, they have demonstrated the public health and safety justification associated with the amendment (AHJs without local amendments to the model code receive full score on this sub-criterion).

Adoption Pathway

- The competitor identifies a SolarAPP+ adoption pathway that could be feasible to implement SolarAPP+ either the integrated or standalone adoption pathway.

Demonstrated Need

- The competitor shows that SolarAPP+ could reduce their solar permit workload and/or expand the AHJ's capability for solar plan review.

Risk Assessment

- The competitor shows a strong understanding of the risks to adopting SolarAPP+ in their AHJ and how to navigate those during the prize period.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

- The competitor demonstrates a compelling justification for how SolarAPP+ can support their DEI priorities, such as increasing low- and moderate-income solar adoption in disadvantaged communities within the AHJ and/or economic development within those areas.

Letter of Support

- The letter demonstrates that the permitting department and other relevant decision makers are in support of adopting SolarAPP+.

Labor Requirements None listed

Examples of Prior Award Recipients N/A

Agency Contact To receive updates on the prize or ask questions, please subscribe by using the contact feature on the [HeroX platform](#) or email SolarPrize@nrel.gov.

Upcoming Webinars and Information Sessions • [September 27, 2022 at 1:00PM ET: The SolarApp+ Prize Informational Webinar - Registration](#)

Types of Partners Required None

Total Allocation \$1 million

Anticipated Award Date May 2023

Links to Grant Opportunity • [American-Made SolarAPP+ Prize Program Page](#)
• [SolarAPP+ Prize Official Rules](#)
• [SolarAPP+ Prize Application Portal](#)
• [Lean more about SolarAPP+](#)