

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
EMBARGOED UNTIL 6:00 AM ET, TUESDAY, JULY 7, 2015

**FACT SHEET: ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES NEW INITIATIVE TO
INCREASE SOLAR ACCESS FOR ALL AMERICANS**

*Including Actions to Scale Up Solar Access and Cut Energy Bills in Communities Across
America*

The Obama Administration is committed to addressing climate change, promoting clean energy, and creating good paying jobs. That is why the Administration is announcing a new initiative to increase access to solar energy for all Americans, in particular low- and moderate- income communities, while expanding opportunities to join the solar workforce.

Last year, the United States brought online as much solar energy every three weeks as it did in all of 2008, and the solar industry added jobs 10 times faster than the rest of the economy. And since the beginning of 2010, the average cost of a solar electric system has dropped by 50 percent. The executive actions and private sector commitments that we are announcing today will help continue to scale up solar for all Americans, including those who are renters, lack the startup capital to invest in solar, or do not have adequate information on how to transition to solar energy. The key components of the initiative that the Administration is announcing today are:

- Launching a National Community Solar Partnership to unlock access to solar for the nearly 50 percent of households and business that are renters or do not have adequate roof space to install solar systems, including issuing a guide to [Support States In Developing Community Solar Programs](#);
- Setting a goal to install 300 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy in federally subsidized housing and providing technical assistance to make it easier to install solar, including clarifying how to use Federal funding;
- Housing authorities, rural electric co-ops, power companies, and organizations in more than 20 states across the country are committing to put in place more than 260 solar energy projects, including projects to help low- and moderate- income communities save on their energy bills and further community solar; and

- More than \$520 million in independent commitments from philanthropic and impact investors, states, and cities to advance community solar and scale up solar and energy efficiency for low- and moderate- income households.

To continue enhancing employment opportunities for all Americans in the solar industry, the Administration is announcing the following executive actions and private sector commitments, including:

- AmeriCorps funding to deploy solar and create jobs in underserved communities;
- Expanding solar energy education and opportunities for job training; and
- The solar industry is also setting its own, independent goal of becoming the most diverse sector of the U.S. energy industry, and a number of companies are announcing that they are taking steps to build a more inclusive solar workforce.

These new actions build on President Obama's goal to train 75,000 workers to enter the solar industry by 2020 and the Solar Ready Vets program that will train transitioning military personnel for careers in the solar industry at 10 military bases.

EXECUTIVE ACTIONS TO SCALE UP SOLAR AND DECREASE ENERGY BILLS

To continue supporting all American communities in deploying clean energy while creating jobs and reducing carbon pollution, the Administration is announcing the following executive actions:

- **Setting A Goal To Install 300 Megawatts Of Renewable Energy in Federally Subsidized Housing:** In the Climate Action Plan, the President set a goal of installing 100 megawatts (MW) of solar and other types of renewable energy in Federally subsidized housing. The Administration has already surpassed that goal, through commitments to install more than 185 MW of renewable energy. Today, we are announcing that the Administration is tripling its current goal and setting a new goal to install 300 MW of renewable energy on affordable by 2020, as well as expanding the goal to include community and shared solar installations.

- **Providing Technical Assistance to Make It Easier to Install Solar on Affordable Housing:** One of the largest barriers to deploying onsite solar on affordable housing is the lack of knowledge on how to initiate the process. To overcome this barrier, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is announcing that it will offer direct technical assistance to affordable housing organizations making a commitment toward the Administration's new

300 MW goal. As part of this assistance, HUD is launching a website to provide policy guidance, tools, and other online resources to help advance solar deployment and the installation of other renewable energy in affordable housing.

- **Developing a Toolkit to Increase the Ability of States to Use Federal Funding to Deploy Solar on Affordable Housing:** To make it easier to use Section 108 Community Development Block Grant funds for solar energy systems, next month, HUD is releasing a renewable energy toolkit for use by Community Planning and Development (CPD) grantees. The toolkit will provide program compliance information, tools, and case study examples to help communities integrate renewable energy components such as solar photovoltaic, solar hot water, and cogeneration into the program in an efficient, cost-effective, and impactful way by using CPD funds. This action builds on an announcement last year during which, HUD's CPD office affirmed that under current guidelines, Section 108 Community Development Block Grant funding can be used for clean energy and energy efficiency projects.

- **Enhancing the Federal Housing Administration (FHA)'s PowerSaver Policy to Make It Easier to Borrow Up To \$25,000 For Solar and Energy-Efficient Improvements:** FHA is planning updates to its second-mortgage program that will make it easier for homeowners to borrow up to \$25,000 for solar and energy-efficient improvements by cutting red tape and making improvements more affordable. Key features of the second mortgage program will include: 1) providing flexible underwriting to recognize the reduced cost of utilities for energy efficient homes; 2) allowing homeowners to control the disbursement of loan funds to the contractor; and 3) permitting contributions to lower out-of-pocket expenses and/or reduce borrower interest rates.

- **Clarifying Policy to Pave the Way for Increased FHA Solar and Energy Efficient Financing on Federally Assisted and Insured Housing.** FHA recently clarified its policy on first mortgages to allow flexible financing options and the ability to obtain larger loan amounts for solar systems. FHA is conducting forums on the updated Single Family Handbook to help increase lender awareness of these financing options, which will be effective September 14, 2015.

- **Launching a National Community Solar Partnership:** The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) in collaboration with HUD, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), representatives from solar companies, NGOs, and state and community leaders are launching a

National Community Solar Partnership to unlock access to solar for the nearly 50 percent of households and business that are renters or do not have adequate roof space to install solar systems. The partnership will leverage the interest in the public and private sector to expand access to community solar, in particular, for low- and moderate- income communities, while utilizing the technical expertise of DOE and the National Laboratories.

- BARC Electric Cooperative
- Black Rock Solar
- State of California
- Clean Energy Collective
- Citi
- Colorado State Energy Office
- District of Columbia Department of the Environment
- First Solar, Inc.
- Grand Valley Power
- Greater Cincinnati Energy Alliance
- GRID Alternatives
- Hawaii Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism
- National League of Cities
- State of New York
- RE-volv
- Solar Energy Industries Association
- Solar Electric Power Association
- Spear Point Energy
- SunShare
- The Solar Foundation
- Vermont Public Service Department
- Vote Solar

- **Issuing A Guide To Support States In Developing Community Solar Programs:** The DOE SunShot Initiative and the National Renewable Energy Lab are releasing a [new guide](#), which answers key program design questions collected from states that have implemented shared solar policies and programs around the country. The guide will also explain how shared solar polices work in conjunction with other polices and provides links to relevant shared solar publications.
- **Launching a Solar Working Group To Save Households on Their Energy Bills:** The DOE SunShot Initiative, with assistance from Sandia National Laboratories and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, is forming a [new working group](#) to disseminate information to new homebuilders that want to offer customer-owned solar PV.

STATE AND PRIVATE SECTOR COMMITMENTS INCREASE SOLAR ENERGY AND CUT ENERGY BILLS IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS AMERICA

States, cities, businesses, and organizations from more than 20 states across the country are making their own, independent commitments to put in place more than 260 solar energy projects in low- and moderate- income communities or to further community solar. These announcements include:

- **22 additional Public Housing Authorities and affordable housing providers** from around the country are committing to install solar and other type of renewable energy on their facilities, to help meet the Administration’s new 300 MW goal. This include:
 - Allegheny County Housing Authority, PA
 - Asheville Housing Authority, NC
 - Boulder Housing Authority, CO
 - BRIDGE Housing, CA
 - Cambridge Housing Authority, MA
 - Community Housing Partners, VA
 - Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority, OH
 - Fresno Housing Authority, CA
 - East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, CA
 - Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles, CA

- King County Housing Authority, WA
- Knox County Housing Authority, IL
- Mercy Housing, Washington, D.C.
- Metro West Housing Authority, CO
- New York City Housing Authority, NY
- New Bedford Housing Authority, MA
- Rural Ulster Preservation Corporation, NY
- San Antonio Housing Authority, TX
- Tampa Housing Authority, FL
- The Core Companies, CA
- Vistula Management Company, OH
- York Housing Authority, PA

- **RE-volv**, a nonprofit organization, is announcing a goal of financing 200 community-based solar energy projects over the next three years. As these communities pay RE-volv back through a solar lease, the money is "paid forward," setting in motion a self-sustaining revolving fund that will finance a new solar project every month. Already, RE-volv has already crowdfunded \$120,000 from people in 38 states and 22 countries to finance 65 kilowatts (kW) of solar on three nonprofits and cooperatives that collectively serve over 1500 families.

- **Private sector companies announcing new projects** in low- and moderate- income communities or to further community solar:

- **More than 30 member-owned, not-for-profit rural electric cooperatives** in 17 states across the country are committing to install community solar projects by the end of 2016. This builds on the nearly 20 co-ops nationally that have already brought online community solar projects in the last year.

- **Spear Point Energy**, is committing to develop nearly 10-15 solar projects for rural water companies in the next year. The program will include green bank financing and create jobs in low-income rural communities.

- **Clean Energy Collective** is announcing three new community solar projects:
 - The first community solar to be built in Texas, CEC will develop a 900kW project in partnership with Nueces Electric cooperative, which will be located near Corpus Christi, Texas, and serve Nueces' full customer base across the state of Texas.
 - A 120 kW community solar project located in Pueblo, Colorado with Black Hills Energy. A significant portion of the array will serve low-income households through a partnership with Posada Pueblo.
 - A new partnership with CPS Energy to develop a 1.2 MW community solar project in the San Antonio area. The project will be the first for CPS Energy and make CPS the largest municipally-owned utility in the nation with a community solar project.
 - **Freetown, MA** will soon complete a shared solar installation. The project - the first to be fully funded and managed by NRG Energy, Inc. in Massachusetts - will provide one megawatt of clean electricity, enough to power nearly 200 homes. This project will provide solar power to residents who would typically not have access solar energy, while reducing the overall cost of their utility bill.

- **The Colorado Energy Office** is launching a shared solar project for low-income households as part of its strategy to comprehensively reduce their energy burden. The project complements Colorado's Weatherization Assistance Program by giving low-income households the ability to reduce electricity costs. The Office has released a Request for Application for a Community Shared Solar System Demonstration Project consisting of varying size and scale that will cumulatively provide more than 1 MW of solar generation solely for low-income shareholders.

- **Vote Solar** is announcing Shared Renewables HQ, a web resource providing state-by-state policy analysis and resources to help communities design programs that work for all income levels.

- **SunEdison and NASCAR** are announcing a partnership to promote distributed residential and commercial solar power through "[NASCAR Green](#)," a platform created in 2008 to educate and promote sustainable solutions to fans and stakeholders on initiatives such as biofuel use, recycling programs, and solar energy adoption. Over the next three years as part of this collaboration, SunEdison and NASCAR will educate the NASCAR fanbase about the benefits of home solar. Additionally, SunEdison will work with NASCAR partners, race track properties, and race teams to design and propose commercial scale solar solutions.

FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS FROM STATES, CITIES, AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO SCALE UP RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Today, leaders from across the country are also committing to invest more than \$520 million to advance community solar or scale up solar and energy efficiency in low- and moderate- income communities.

- **Community Capital Management** is committing to investing \$100 million in government-assisted rental housing that support environmental and energy efficiency initiatives, including deploying solar energy systems to meet the Administration's new 300 MW goal, indoor environmental quality, and site remediation in the next year.

- **Clean Energy Collective (CEC)** is announcing that it has secured over \$400 million in cumulative financial backing to help scale up community solar nationwide.

- **Craft3**, a nonprofit community development financial institution, is committing \$12 million to expand its on-bill repayment loan program to help homeowners convert from high-carbon oil heat to natural gas and electric heat pumps, including financing oil tank decommissioning, the installation of high-efficiency gas furnaces, heat pumps and weatherization measures. The program will focus on low to moderate income households that do not qualify for low-income weatherization support where borrowers will repay their loans through their utility bill. Today's announcement builds on Craft3's March commitment to work with MPower, a non-profit company dedicated to provide \$4 million in financing for building-wide energy efficiency services to qualified affordable housing facilities. Since 2009, Craft3 has provided over \$40 million in energy efficiency financing to 3,000 Oregon and Washington households.

- **The District of Columbia Department of the Environment** is announcing that it will launch a plan to invest up to \$6 million in community solar for low-income residents this fall. Today's announcement builds on their existing

initiative to install 130 solar panels on low-income homes in 250 days by September 30, 2015.

- **California** is announcing a new \$3 million pilot program for multi-family homes that provides credit support to facilitate energy improvements. The program will offer multi-family affordable housing credit support for energy efficiency improvements, including solar water heating. The program is expected to facilitate improvements in 1000 housing units. This builds on the California Energy Commission's New Solar Homes Partnership, a program that encourages solar on new construction, currently has \$3.5 million in reservations for future solar on affordable housing, representing 2.26MW. To date, the program has provided \$23 million in incentives for 883 affordable housing systems, representing 7.69 MW.
- **The State of Hawaii**, is committing to open up financing for solar energy systems for renters, through the financing of community-based renewable energy projects, and energy efficiency projects to non-profits and small businesses in the coming months. Through the Hawaii Green Infrastructure Authority, the State has already committed to financing \$150 million of clean energy technologies for underserved Hawaii homeowners, renters, non-profits and small businesses by the end of 2016. In March 2015, the Authority launched financing for solar PV to underserved non-profits and small businesses, with financing for solar PV to underserved homeowners available by July 2015.
- **The State of Massachusetts** is committing to exploring new models to support community solar projects through the Massachusetts Solar Loan Program. Through the program Massachusetts will work with the solar industry and lenders to provide affordable financing for solar electricity, with specific support for low- and moderate- income residents as well as community solar projects. MassCEC and DOER will also continue to work collaboratively with the private sector to create pathways towards innovative community solar models and projects that increase access to solar electricity for Massachusetts residents.
- **The Vermont Public Service Department** is announcing that it will launch a new statewide program to support customers that want to participate in community solar through an interest rate buy-down fund, with support from the DOE's Rooftop Solar Challenge II. The buy-down program will boost access to group net metering systems, in particular for those that cannot afford their own solar systems, and will enhance the state's efforts to reduce barriers to going

solar. These include the financial incentives such as the state's solar adder and regulatory initiatives such as the statewide 10-day registration form for projects under 15 kW. Today's announcement builds on the lessons learned through a pilot program in Windham County. Vermont is also enhancing access to solar for public entities by working with them to create tools such as the recently released Solar Group Net Metering Agreement Template for Vermont's Municipalities and Schools.

- **Washington State Housing Finance Commission** is announcing the **EnergySpark Home Loan**, a new home-loan program from the Washington State Housing Finance Commission. EnergySpark gives homebuyers an incentive to buy a home that is constructed to high efficiency standards that are at least 15 percent above code, or to make efficiency improvements to an existing home that cut its energy use by at least 10 percent. The program offers a quarter-percent off the interest rate, and also allows buyers of older homes to finance the cost of modest improvements, for example, installing renewable energy, adding insulation, replacing windows or upgrading to an efficient furnace, right into the cost of the mortgage at the time of purchase. When added to the Commission's downpayment assistance, EnergySpark gives low- and moderate-income homebuyers not only savings on their home purchase, but savings on utilities over the long term.

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE ENERGY WORKFORCE

The solar industry is adding jobs 10 times faster than the rest of the economy. They are good paying jobs that are helping American's enter into the middle class. In fact, earlier this year, President Obama announced a new goal to train 75,000 workers to enter the solar industry by 2020 and a Solar Ready Vets program to train transitioning military personnel for careers in this growing industry at 10 bases. To continue enhancing employment opportunities for all Americans, including low-income and minority communities, the Administration is announcing the following executive actions and private sector commitments:

- **Announcing Funding through AmeriCorps that will Deploy Solar and Create Jobs in Low-Income Communities:** The Corporation for National and Community Service is supporting GRID Alternatives' SolarCorps program. Through the program, 40 AmeriCorps members will gain hands-on training and skills to access jobs in the booming solar industry, while providing clean energy to low-income families who need the savings to pay for basic expenses, through service at GRID Alternatives affiliates and offices throughout the country. At the end of the first program year, the AmeriCorps members will be responsible for helping retrofit 1500 low-income homes

with solar power and will help 200 economically disadvantaged individuals gain jobs in the solar industry, while securing jobs for themselves at the end of their years of service. In addition, the AmeriCorps members will leverage an additional 4000 volunteers who will be engaged in installing solar for low-income families.

- **Expanding Renewable Energy Education and Job Training:** HUD, DOE, and the Department of Education launched “STEM, Energy, and Economic Development” or “SEED.” SEED is a place-based initiative, currently operating in five cities; DC, Cleveland, Tampa, San Antonio, and Denver. This project will leverage Federal investments and partnerships to support workforce development and educational opportunities in the energy sector for public housing residents. Today, we are announcing a key part of this initiative will be focused on the solar industry.
- **Launching a Webinar Series to Provide Information about Job Opportunities:** DOE is launching an eight-part [webinar series](#) through its Minorities in Energy Initiative to discuss the regional impacts of climate change on minority and Tribal communities and job opportunities in renewable-energy and energy-efficiency sectors to support a growing, next-generation workforce. In addition, experts will discuss findings from the Quadrennial Energy Review (QER) and outline Federal energy policy objectives as they relate to climate resilience, including underserved communities. Authors of the National Climate Assessment will discuss their findings and the regional applicability to communities who are disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change.
- **Announcing a New Goal by the Solar Industry to Become the Most Diverse Sector of the U.S. Energy Industry:** The **Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA)** is announcing a new goal of becoming the most diverse sector of the U.S. energy industry, promoting greater workforce diversity – from gender, nationality, and race to veteran status, sexual orientation and beyond. According to the *The Solar Foundation’s National Solar Jobs Census 2014*, “the solar workforce is increasingly diverse, with select demographic groups (i.e., Latino/Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and African American solar workers, along with women and veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces) representing a larger percentage of the solar workforce” than was observed in 2013. The Solar Foundation report indicates the solar industry has already surpassed a number of other energy sectors when it comes to both ethnic and gender diversity. To ensure that the solar industry can achieve its new goal, the solar industry plans to ramp up its training and recruitment opportunities nationwide.

- **Individual Private Sector Commitments:** A number of individual companies are taking steps to build a more inclusive solar workforce. Their independent commitments include the following:

- As part of a \$5 million philanthropic partnership called the Realizing an Inclusive Solar Economy (RISE) that **SunEdison entered into with GRID Alternatives** earlier this year, today, GRID Alternatives, in collaboration with Civic Works, is training residents in East Baltimore to enter the solar industry. RISE aims to train 4,000 applicants from underserved communities to begin solar careers. GRID Alternatives and SunEdison will work with over 70 job training organizations and community colleges over the next two years and offer recruitment venues, hands-on solar installation training, one-year paid fellowships, webinars, and other opportunities for applicants from underserved communities to begin a solar career. Training opportunities will be available across the country, including through extensive outreach that drives job applicants to job fairs at major solar industry events like Intersolar in San Francisco in July 2015 and Solar Power International in Anaheim in September 2015.

- **PosiGen**, commits to increase the diversity of its workforce and unlock employment opportunities for low-income households, including by hiring 40 percent of their employees from low- and moderate- income communities by the end of 2016. To realize this goal, PosiGen is also committing to increasing its infrastructure investment in low- and moderate-income communities by more than \$100 million by the end of 2016.

Nautilus Solar Energy proudly commits to expand solar installations in low-income communities and to continue working towards creating a brighter future for communities everywhere. Both woman-owned and veteran-owned, with females comprising approximately half of its employees, Nautilus Solar Energy provides businesses, schools and not-for-profit organizations across the United States and Canada with solar power.