



Solar Ready II

Best Management Practices for Solar Installation Policy

Process Improvements

Step 3, PR 3-A—Pre-qualify Installers

Develop a process for pre-qualification of installers

This BMP calls for creating criteria for identifying installers eligible for pre-qualification. Two primary criteria can be used: 1) recognition by an outside accrediting organization or 2) a documented record of success. Recognition by an outside accrediting organization could require installers to provide proof of accreditation from the North America Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP). At the state level, accreditation in New York and Florida has been tied to eligibility to access incentive programs. On a local level, a record of success may be demonstrated by requiring installers to demonstrate a certain number of successfully constructed and permitted installations. Currently, Kansas City, Missouri, and Johnson County, Kansas, maintain a list of licensed contractors; this list could be expanded to include contractors who have NABCEP or another solar-related qualifications.

In addition to defining the specific criteria for installer pre-qualification, the benefit to an installer must be clarified as well. Benefits may include the ability to submit permit applications electronically or receive expedited over-the-counter permit review. These types of permit application processes work well and are an efficient use of staff time, provided the applicant has all of the necessary information readily available in the desired format. An applicant who has repeatedly gone through the process successfully is the most likely to be able to provide this information. Reserving these options for pre-qualified installers makes the permit application process more efficient, not only to installers, but to permit reviewers as well.

Examples

City of Portland, Oregon

In Portland, installers may use an e-submit process if they have demonstrated familiarity with the statewide solar installation code and successfully applied for photovoltaic (PV) permits via the traditional in-person submittal process.
www.portlandoregon.gov/bds/article/333913

State of Connecticut, Eligible Contractor List

Connecticut's residential solar rebate program is administered by the Clean Energy Finance Investment Authority. Only installers listed as approved contractors are able to access Residential Solar Investment Funds for owner-operated or third-party leased solar systems. Installers are approved based on their installation history.
www.energizect.com/residents/programs/residential-solar-investment-program

North American Board of Certified Energy Professionals (NABCEP)

NABCEP has developed a certification program for renewable energy and energy-efficiency professionals. Certifications are available in PV technical sales and PV installation. Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas, currently offers a Solar Technology Certificate and Degree Program to prepare students for the NABCEP entry-level exam and provide the design and fieldwork experience to qualify to take the installer exam.
www.nabcep.org

State of Hawaii, Solar Contractor Licensing

The State of Hawaii's Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs offers specialty licenses for solar power, solar energy, solar hot water and solar heating and cooling. The licenses are issued after successful completion of trade exams and four years of experience. The Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs maintains a list of all licensed contractors in the State.

www.dsireusa.org/incentives/incentive.cfm?Incentive_Code=HI03R

For information on Solar Ready II and the Best Management Practices visit <http://narc.org/bmps/>

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