

Tool #2:

Working with Stakeholders

What is it?

Regional planning organizations are in the unique position to advance solar energy technology improvements by engaging regional stakeholders, including utilities, local municipalities, state government, local solar or renewable energy associations, and consumers. Regional planning organizations can engage stakeholders to promote solar “friendly” policies, increase awareness of solar energy solutions, and facilitate the design and implementation of strategic local solar plans.

By collaborating with a range of different stakeholders, regional planning organizations can make significant strides toward advancing solar adoption in a region.

How do you do it?

- Work with utilities to promote policies, rules and regulations that affect solar installation, such as net metering and interconnection standards.
- Partner with state and local governments to adopt policies encouraging solar installations in your region.
- Collaborate with local Solar Energy Industry Association (SEIA) chapters to assist in removing market barriers, strengthen the solar industry and educate the public on the benefits of solar energy.
- Create relationships with State Energy Offices. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 allotted money to State Energy Offices to promote energy-related programs.
- Host a workshop to increase public awareness and interest in solar technology.
- Distribute materials created by U.S. DOE or other entities that are specifically crafted for different stakeholder groups.
- Create a working group or committee to identify the current regulatory, policy and incentive framework in order to accurately assess the changes necessary to advance solar energy in your region.

Who else is doing it?

- The Green River Area Development District (GRADD) organized the Green Living Symposium, a one day workshop on nurturing sustainability on the local level. The event brought together local advocates and stakeholders to encourage discussion on local sustainability efforts. For more information, see the GRADD profile on page 13 of this *Guide*.
- The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) established an Alternative Energy Ordinance Working Group, which convened local leadership to compile resources supporting the development of small scale alternative energy systems. For more information see the DVRPC case study on page 32 of this *Guide* or visit <http://www.dvrpc.org/energyclimate/aeowg.htm>.
- The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) created the Center for Energy and Environment to bring together greenways, sustainable growth, energy efficiency and air quality programs, and stakeholders that serve the region’s needs and visions. For more information, see the MORPC profile on page 14 of this *Guide* or visit <http://www.morpc.org/energy/center/main.asp>.
- The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) was instrumental in the creation of the California Center for Sustainable Energy (CCSE), an independent nonprofit organization that fosters public policies and provides programs, services and information that facilitates the adoption of clean and renewable energy technologies and practices in the San Diego region. For more information, see the SANDAG profile on page 21 of this *Guide* or visit <http://energycenter.org/index.php>.

Where can I get more information?

- The Interstate Renewable Energy Council’s (IREC) *Connecting to the Grid* provides information on state level interconnection standards. For more information, visit <http://irecusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Connecting-to-the-Grid-Guide-6th-edition.pdf>.
- IREC’s Model Net Metering Rules provides state level model net metering policies. For more information, visit http://irecusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/IREC_NM_Model_October_2009-1-22.pdf.
- The U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) *Solar Powering Your Community: A Guide for Local Governments* is a comprehensive resource created to assist local governments and stakeholders in designing and implementing a strategic local solar plan. The guidebook includes a section on improving utility policies and processes on page 81-96. http://www4.eere.energy.gov/solar/sunshot/resource_center/sites/default/files/solar-powering-your-community-guide-for-local-governments.pdf