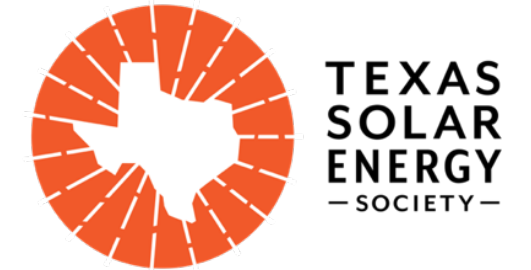


IREC ICMA



SolSmart 101 Webinar: Streamlining the Solar Permitting Process

**NCTCOG/DFWCC, IREC & ICMA, City of
McKinney, SolarApp Foundation, TXSES**

August 26, 2026

Virtual Housekeeping Items

Welcome all!

- Please refrain from using any AI note-taking services.
- Please remember to keep microphones muted unless speaking.
- Please feel free to ask questions using the chat.
- We will be recording the webinar and posting it online.



Agenda

1. Overview of the SolSmart Program
2. SolSmart Community Success Story
3. Overview of the SolarAPP+ Tool
4. Solar Consumer Rights
5. Q&A

Brandy O'Quinn (IREC), Andrew Light (WRI)

Sujata Gautam (City of McKinney)

Justin Slusarski (SolarApp Foundation)

Patrice "Pete" Parsons (TXSES)



Who We Are

Regional Planning Agency



Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)



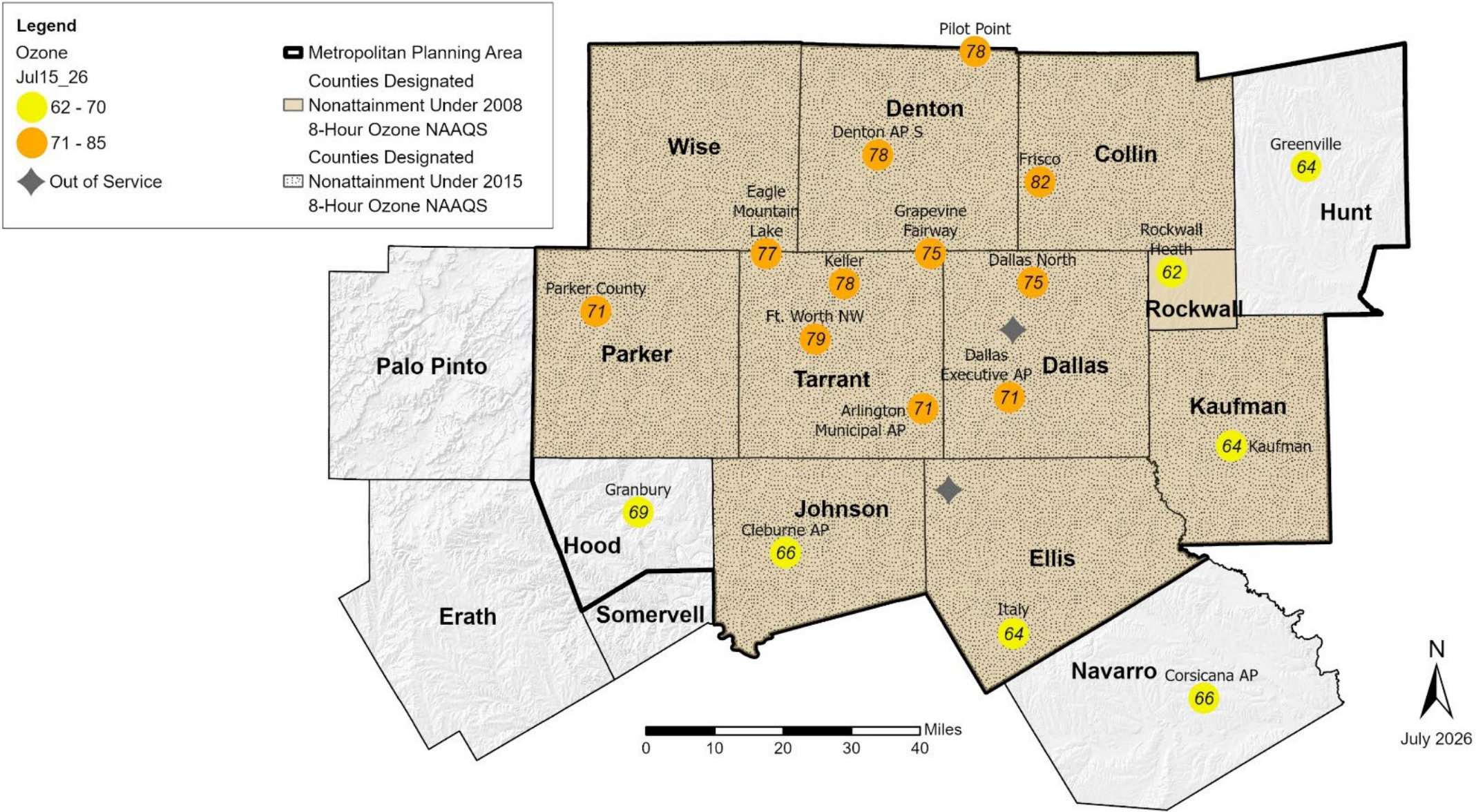
Department of Energy-Designated Clean Cities Coalition



Sister Coalitions in Texas:
Alamo Area Clean Cities (San Antonio)
Houston-Galveston Clean Cities
Central Texas Clean Cities (Austin)



North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) Region and Nonattainment Areas



Source: NCTCOG

Thank You to Our Dallas-Fort Worth Clean Cities Sponsors



Interested in Sponsoring DFWCC?
Visit [DFW Clean Cities - Sponsorships!](#)

AUGUST

SCHOOL SAFETY

Creating Safer Journeys Back to Learning



NCTCOG PROGRAM INITIATIVES

Working with communities, businesses and local governments to implement safety programs.

KIDS CAN HELP

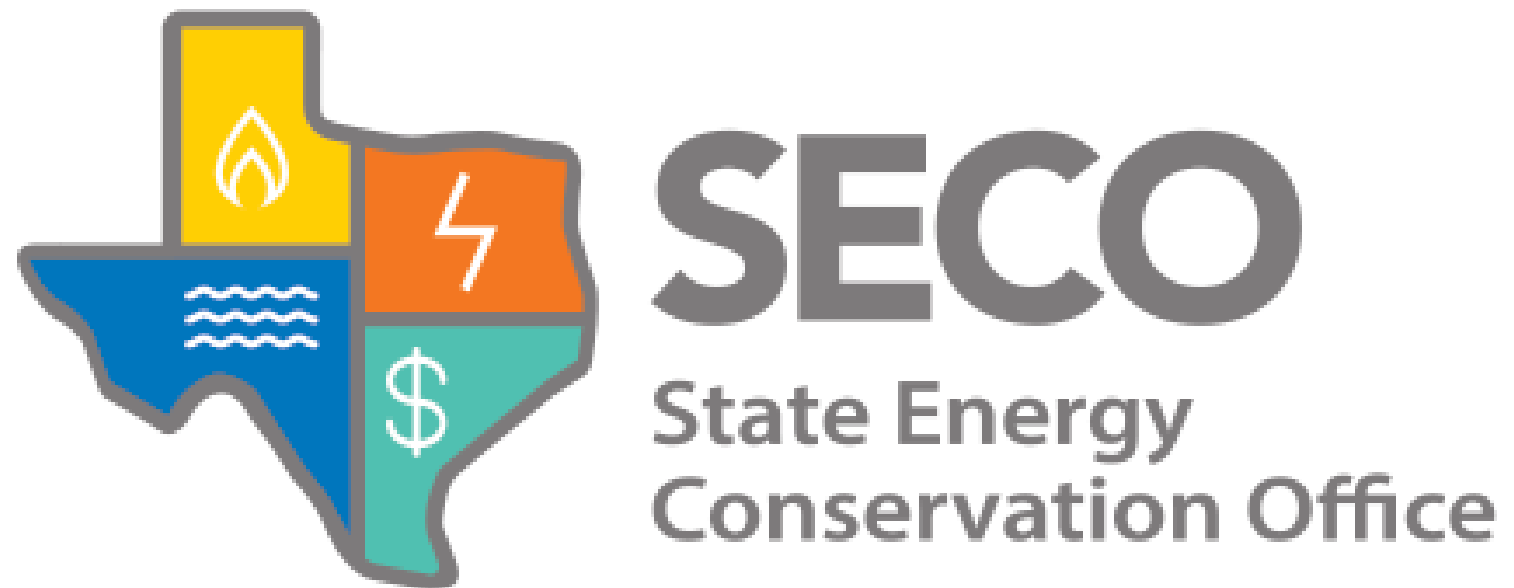
Obey traffic laws and watch surroundings, especially around buses and cars.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

Finding safe routes to school, watch speed in school zones and help kids stay connected and informed.



Webinar Sponsor



NCTCOG receives funding through SECO to work on energy management and efficiency projects within the region. As part of this work, we have provided workshops, webinars, and technical assistance on a variety of energy management, energy efficiency, water efficiency, and renewable energy topics.



Energy Ready

NATIONALLY DISTINGUISHED. LOCALLY POWERED.

Powered by



Energy Ready

Energy Ready is a suite of free national technical assistance programs for local governments, including **Charging Smart**, **SolSmart** and **Distributed Wind Smart**. These programs offer free expert guidance, best practices and if desired, public recognition for energy ready actions.

Energy Ready is led by **IREC** and **ICMA**, with support from the **U.S. Department of Energy**.





Benefits of Solar Development

- Encourages energy **independence** and creates **new jobs**.
- Gives residents and businesses **affordable energy choices**.
- Reduces energy **costs, burdens, and dependency**.
- **Stabilizes energy costs** during geopolitical events.
- Supports a more **resilient electric grid**.

What Is SolSmart?

SolSmart, part of the Energy Ready suite of programs, is a **national designation program that provides FREE technical assistance** to help local governments offer safe, affordable energy options to their residents and businesses by removing red tape.





600+ designated communities

44 states and counting

Over **1 in 3** U.S. residents
live in a SolSmart
designated community



SolSmart Helps Local Governments

Remove Barriers
for Solar

Free Technical Assistance &
Resources

Reduce Solar
Soft Costs



DID YOU KNOW?

“Soft costs” make up **65%** of the total cost of a residential solar PV system!

SolSmart Partners



Best Practices & Customized Support

The **SolSmart Program Guides** summarize best practices for local governments, counties, and regional governments.



Technical Assistance is tailored around the goals and priorities of your community.

This includes expert review of materials, webinars, trainings, and 1:1 consultations.

Templates and Examples

Communities are provided with templates, checklists, community examples, and guidance documents.



SolSmart Guidance and Template

CE-1

Post a solar landing page on local government’s website with information that may include the community’s solar goals, educational materials and tools that promote solar, and resources for solar development (e.g. permitting checklist, application forms, zoning regulations, etc.). (Required for Silver)

Objective:
A solar landing page is a way to provide residents, businesses, and solar installers with important information about your community’s solar energy policies, processes, goals, and metrics from one centralized location. It is also a way to educate community members about solar energy topics like financing options and consumer protection best practices. Information and resources posted should be made available in multiple languages, as appropriate for your community, and should be available to community members in print form if requested.

The CE-1 criteria is completed when the solar landing page is publicly accessible on the local government’s webpage. Opportunities for the community to achieve additional points have been called out via comments throughout the template.



Space for Logo and/or Contact information:
Office/Department | Room | Address | Phone Number | Email Address | Website

Rooftop Solar Photovoltaic (PV) System Field Inspection Checklist

This checklist provides basic guidelines for inspecting most residential rooftop solar PV systems (15 kW and under). Ground-mounted systems, systems with energy storage, building-integrated systems, and commercial systems, for example, would not be fully covered by this checklist. The intent of using the checklist is to provide transparent and well-defined information to minimize the number of re-inspections and accelerate project completion for most PV systems. These guidelines are not exhaustive.

Make sure all PV disconnects and circuit breakers are in the open position and verify the following:
Helpful tip: Update the following checklist to include any relevant state or local code requirements.

- ☐ 1. All work done in a neat and workmanlike manner [NEC 110.12].
- ☐ 2. PV module model number, quantity, and location according to the approved plan.
- ☐ 3. Array mounting system and structural connections according to the approved plan and manufacturers’ instructions.
- ☐ 4. Roof penetrations flashed/sealed according to the approved plan and manufacturers’ instructions.
- ☐ 5. Exposed cables are properly secured, supported, and routed to prevent physical damage.
- ☐ 6. Conduit installation according to NEC 690.31(D) and the approved plan.
- ☐ 7. Firefighter access according to IRC R324 and the approved plan.
- ☐ 8. Roof-mounted PV mounting system and modules have sufficient fire classification [IRC R324.4.2].
- ☐ 9. Grounding/bonding of rack, modules, inverter(s), and other electrical equipment according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
- ☐ 10. Equipment installed, listed, and labeled according to the approved plan and manufacturers’ instructions (e.g., PV modules, inverters, dc-to-dc converters, rapid shutdown equipment).
- ☐ 11. For grid-connected systems, inverter is marked “interactive,” or documentation is provided to show that inverter meets utility interconnection requirements.
- ☐ 12. Conductors, cables, and conduit types, sizes, and markings according to the approved plan.
- ☐ 13. Overcurrent devices are the type and size according to the approved plan.
- ☐ 14. Disconnects according to the approved plan and properly located as required by the NEC.
- ☐ 15. Inverter output circuit breaker is located at opposite end of bus from utility supply at load center and/or service panelboard. If panel is center-fed, inverter output circuit breaker can be at either end of busbar [NEC 705.12(B)] (not required if the sum of the inverter and utility supply circuit breakers is less than or equal to the panelboard bus rating).
- ☐ 16. PV system markings, labels, and signs according to the approved plan.
- ☐ 17. Connection of the PV system equipment grounding conductors according to the approved plan.
- ☐ 18. Access and working space for operation and maintenance of PV equipment such as inverters, disconnecting means and panelboards (not required for PV modules) [NEC 110.26].
- ☐ 19. The rapid shutdown system is installed and operational according to the approved plan and manufacturers’ instructions [NEC 690.12].



Solar PV Field Inspection Checklist Version 1, Updated 3/10/21

SolSmart Industry Advisory Partners



Standard Pathway to Designation

Each designation level has a set of criteria with corresponding points depending on the impact.



60 points



100 points



200 points



350 points

Designation Requirements

Total General Points: 60

Specific Required Criteria:

- Solar statement
- Solar permitting checklist
- Zoning review

Required Points From Specific Categories:

Permitting & Inspection: 20 points

Planning & Zoning: 20 points

Points From Any Action(s): 20



Designation Requirements

Total Points: 100

Specific Required Criteria:

All specific Bronze requirements plus:

- Complete permit staff training
- Complete inspection staff training
- Complete zoning clarification
- Solar landing page



Designation Requirements

Total Points: 200

Specific Required Criteria:

All specific Silver requirements plus:

- Permit turnaround time
- Zoning accessory use
- Zoning barrier removal



Designation Requirements

Total Points: 350

Specific Required Criteria:

All specific Gold requirements plus:

- Instant permitting
- Install solar
- Community partnerships





“ The city of Athens was an early adopter of SolSmart ... And then a few years later we kept working on cutting through the red tape for residents of Athens, we became SolSmart Gold... And then most recently we've gotten to the point where someone can apply for solar on their residential property and pretty much walk away with a permit within 24 hours and get solar.

Mayor Patterson - Athens, OH



SPRING 2027
TEXAS
SOLAR
COHORT

Join our next cohort!

**Sign up before December
1st**

CONTACT

Lauren Taylor

Program Manager

laurent@irecusa.org



Cohort based engagement transforms isolated local efforts into regional momentum...Through the NOPEC SolSmart Cohort, 20 Ohio communities came together to exchange ideas, navigate challenges, remove zoning barriers, and accelerate implementation. Cohort model strengthens long term capacity needed to advance sustainability and resilience collectively in communities."

Deepa Vedavyas - NOPEC



An **Energy** Ready Program

NATIONALLY DISTINGUISHED. LOCALLY POWERED.

FREE TRAINING

Best Practices in Permitting and
Inspection for Solar PV and Large-Scale
Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)

This webinar is eligible for .20 ICC continuing education credits.



Thursday, September 3
1-3 P.M. EST

[ENERGY-READY.ORG/EVENTS](https://energy-ready.org/events)

Next Steps: Connect With SolSmart!

Brandy O'Quinn

Program Director

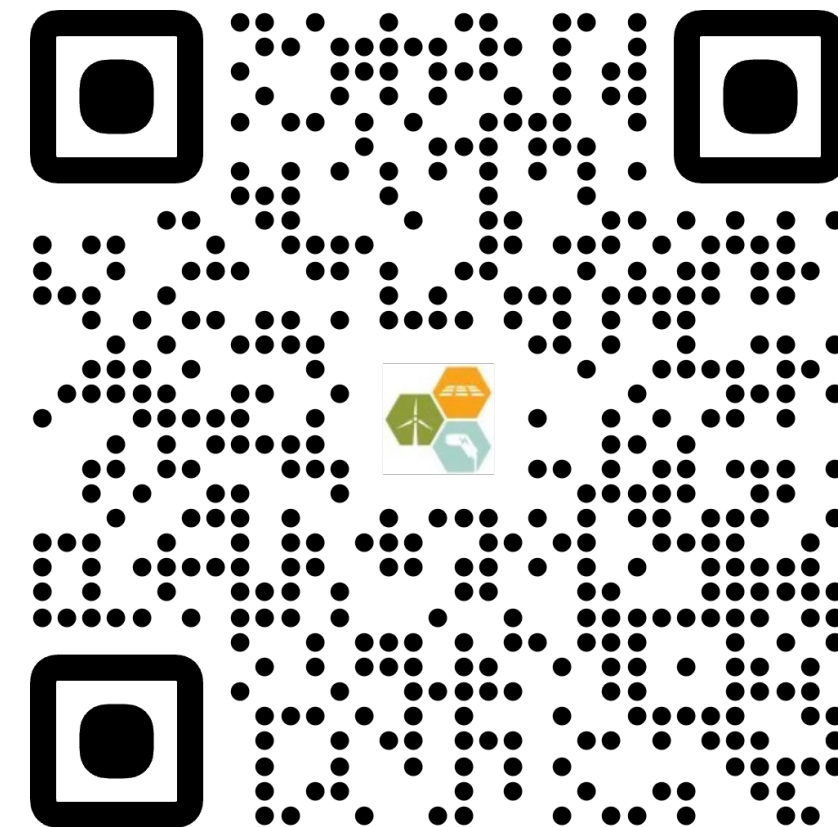
brandyo@irecusa.org

Lauren Taylor

Program Manager

laurent@irecusa.org

READY TO JOIN?



City of McKinney's SolSmart Designation Journey

August 26, 2026



Why McKinney Pursued SolSmart



**Sustainability
Roadmap Alignment**



**Improve Solar
Permitting Process**



**Free Technical
Assistance & Funding**

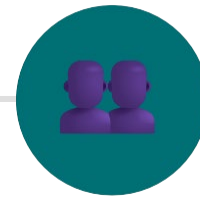
Journey to Bronze

October '26



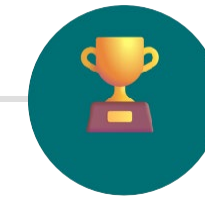
- Connected with National Technical Assistance Partner
- Baseline assessment
- Planning review

Nov'25 - Jan'26



- Cross-department coordination
- Bronze action items

Jan' 26



**Bronze designation
awarded**

Key Action Items

Actions Completed

-  Zoning Review Documentation
-  Training
-  Proposed Updates to Code

Existing Strengths

-  Existing solar PV installation
-  Establish Permitting Process
-  Online Permitting

Lessons Learned



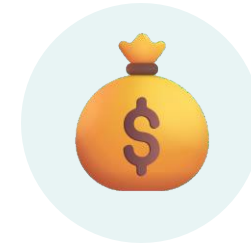
**Engage Planning
Early**



**Build on
Existing Work**



**Texas Is
Different**



**Economics
Matter**

Texas Regulatory Environment

Pros

Straightforward permitting

Fewer local barriers

Cons

Limited oversight

Public trust concerns

Fewer incentive opportunities



What's Next

Bronze



Completed

Bronze designation awarded
Jan 2026

Charging Smart



In Progress

Expanding EV readiness
and infrastructure policies

Silver



Next Milestone

Strengthening solar policies
and community impact

Closing Takeaways



Quick



Low Cost



**Reinforces
Sustainability
Committment**

Thank You

Questions?

Sujata Gautam,
Sustainability Manager
sgautam@mckinneytexas.org





Solar & storage permitting, standardized.

A free, automated permitting platform from a nonprofit — helping Texas jurisdictions issue instant, code-compliant solar and storage permits.

Justin Slusarski · Jurisdiction Outreach Lead · SolarAPP Foundation

NCTCOG SolSmart 101 Webinar



A FREE PUBLIC RESOURCE

Built by a nonprofit. Free for every jurisdiction.

SolarAPP+ is developed and maintained by the SolarAPP Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Our goal is advancing clean energy — not revenue — so there's no cost to local governments to implement the platform.

No cost, no contract

No license fee, no per-permit cost. Free to implement and run, forever.

Nonprofit-run

Developed by NREL, stewarded by the SolarAPP Foundation as a public good.

You stay in control

Your codes, your inspections, your permit fees — all kept in-house.



THE CHALLENGE

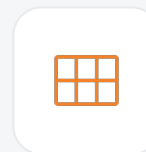
Thousands of jurisdictions. No two alike.

Solar permitting is a patchwork of inconsistent, non-standard processes. That red tape lands on all three groups the process is meant to serve.



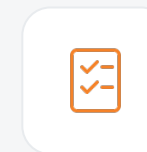
Local governments

- Incomplete, poor-quality plan submissions
- Frequent revision cycles clog the queue
- Hard to hire and retain review staff



Contractors

- Different requirements in every jurisdiction
- Unpredictable, stop-start timelines
- Rework that eats already-thin margins



Residents

- Inconsistent code and safety enforcement
- Higher costs from permitting friction
- Barriers to affordable clean energy



THE SOLUTION

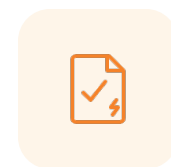
A real plan review, run instantly.

SolarAPP+ standardizes review for residential solar **and battery storage** — issuing a permit your jurisdiction owns and inspects.



1 · Contractor submits

Licensed installer enters system specs in their existing workflow.



2 · Automated review

260+ code checks run against your jurisdiction's settings in seconds.



3 · Your permit issues

A compliant permit is issued under your authority — you keep the inspection.



Review stays **in-house** — unlike third-party review, you keep oversight, local control, and permit fee revenue.



THE PAYOFF

Lower costs, safer installs, faster designation.

~\$1,100

Average soft-cost
reduction per project

260+

Code checks on every
permit

29%

Fewer failed
inspections



Your fast track to SolSmart Platinum

Platinum requires an instant-approval pathway – the SolSmart guidebook names SolarAPP+ as the way to meet it.

+20

points for demonstrating
an instant-approval
pathway



WHO BENEFITS

The same fix helps everyone.

One automated, standardized process turns each of those pain points into a win.



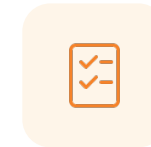
Governments

- + Complete, code-compliant submissions every time
- + Staff freed from repetitive plan review
- + Oversight, control, and fee revenue kept in-house



Contractors

- + One standard process across jurisdictions
- + Instant, predictable permit turnaround
- + Less rework, more installs completed



Residents

- + More affordable systems from lower soft costs
- + Faster access to clean energy and storage
- + Safer, verified, code-compliant installs



LIVE IN TEXAS TODAY

Texas is already on SolarAPP+.

Jurisdictions across the state are issuing instant, in-house permits right now — with more coming online each month.

- Denison
- Celina
- Irving
- Tool
- Waco
- Houston

1,100+

permits already issued in Texas

160+

contractors registered in Texas



FREE. NONPROFIT. BUILT FOR YOUR COMMUNITY.

Less paperwork. More progress.

SolarAPP+ is free for jurisdictions and we handle setup. I'd love to walk your team through what adoption looks like.

Schedule an intro call →



Justin Slusarski · gosolarapp.org

Protect the Consumer, Protect the Deal



**TEXAS
SOLAR
ENERGY**
— SOCIETY —

Patrice 'Pete' Parsons

www.txses.org



- **Our Mission:** To expand access to clean, local solar, storage and distributed energy resources so every Texan can benefit from affordable, local power
- ***Our Vision:*** A Texas where every person can access, understand, and adopt solar, storage, and emerging clean energy solutions—lowering energy costs, strengthening resilience, and powering thriving communities.



SB 1036- The Bill

- Was supported by the Texas Solar Energy Society and others
- Huge residential solar consumer protection bill
Prevails over all municipal ordinances relating to the topic
- Required PUC to adopt rules prohibiting deceptive residential solar retail tactics
- Requires solar retailers/salespeople to provide disclosures and educational materials when selling
- PUC must regulate the format of a solar sales agreement and establish insurance requirements for solar retailers
- PUC must develop educational materials informing consumers of their rights and may require solar retailers to provide customers with these

Rule Highlights: Registration Fees

New Registration & Annual Renewal Fees

- Solar Retailer Registration Fee: **\$350**
- Solar Salesperson Registration Fee: **\$56**
- Texas Licensed Electrical Contractors and their employees are **exempt** from Solar registration requirements but are subject to all other requirements in SB 1036 and agency rules

Rule Highlights: Insurance Requirements

- **General Liability**
- Minimum \$1 million per occurrence and \$2 million in the aggregate
- Must be issued by:
 - Insurance company authorized to do business in Texas
 - Eligible Texas surplus lines insurer
 - Texas registered risk retention group **OR**
 - Texas registered purchasing group
- Must cover liability to consumers from acts of retailer and salespersons authorized to act on the retailer's behalf

Rule Highlights: Contract Requirements

- Must be written in English unless another language is requested by consumer
- If over 65 provide the contract in writing
- Will be accompanied by a fill in the blank disclosure document. (will be provided by TDLR) that states the terms of the sale.
 - Prominently and in plain language set forth any energy production guarantees, the terms conditions of any warranty, and any provisions related to the rights and remedies of any party in the event of a default
- Be written in clear, understandable language that is easy to read
- State the name, business address, registration number, business email address, and business phone number, of both the solar retailer and solar salesperson



Rule Highlights: Contract Requirements

- Buyer can cancel the agreement within 5 business days; date must be provided in the terms
- PUC or TDLR can order cancellation and refund of sale/lease if there's a violation
- Retailers must supervise their salespeople and make “reasonable efforts” to correct violations of this bill
- Sales agreement for installation must give contractor info and utility approval (if applicable)



Rule Highlights: Installer Requirements

- Provide that the installer will be a **Texas-licensed electrical contractor**
- State the name and license number of the installer, or a list of names and license numbers of electrical contractors from which the installer will be selected
- Provide that the solar retailer or installer will obtain any permit required by a government entity for the installation; and approval by the electric utility, electric cooperative, or municipally owned utility serving the person's residence of the interconnection of the residential solar energy system, if necessary

Rule Highlights: Salesperson Requirements

- TDLR can conduct a criminal history check of applicants
- PUC or TDLR can order cancellation and refund of sale/lease if there's a violation
- Retailers must supervise their salespeople and make “reasonable efforts” to correct violations of this bill
- May not violate no soliciting signs
- False implication of affiliation with a public utility or gov agency

Rule Highlights: Salesperson Requirements

- Requires registration for solar salespeople and retailers
 - have to provide registration info within each sales agreement
- Retailer applications must include:
 - name and registration number of each solar salesperson
 - evidence that the retailer has the required insurance
- Must get continuing educational requirements after the first year
 - hours to be determined by TDLR- hours being discussed but will increase each year

Penalty for Violation

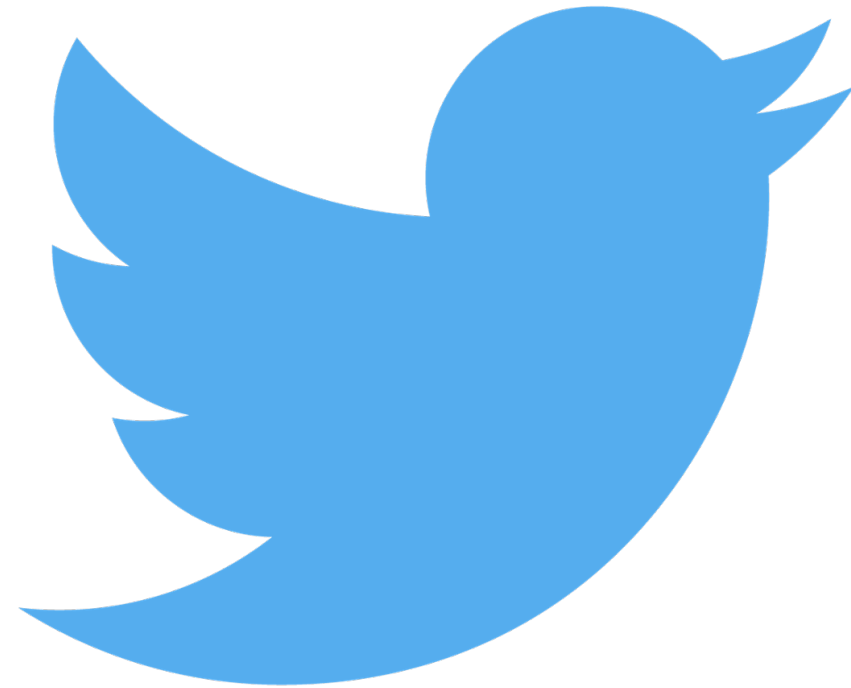
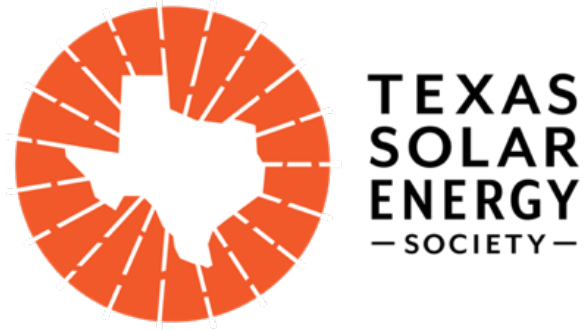
- \$2,500 each
- \$50k aggregate
- Penalty if a person over 55 was harmed:
 - \$10k each
 - \$100k aggregate

Rule Highlights: Third-Party Lenders

If the sale or lease of a residential solar energy system involves a **third-party lender** that is affiliated with or referred by the solar retailer or solar salesperson, the solar contract must include provisions:

- Requiring the third-party lender to cancel any accompanying loan made by the third-party lender to the buyer or lessee upon the consumer's cancellation of the solar contract under §1806.156 of the Act; and
- Requiring the solar retailer to pay the outstanding balance of the loan in the event a cancellation is ordered by the Department or Executive Director after notice and a hearing, in accordance with §1806.207 of the Act

Follow Us!!



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@TexasSolarEnergySociety



@TexasSolarEnergySociety



Thank you.

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Texas Solar Energy Society**

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www.txses.org



**TEXAS
SOLAR
ENERGY**
— SOCIETY —

Q & A

If you haven't already, please submit any questions through the chat!

Contact Us!



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