

SEIA's Commitment to Inclusive Solar Policies

History

As the national solar trade association, SEIA encourages solutions to maximize access to solar energy to ALL families and communities. Historically, access to solar energy has been more difficult for Low-Moderate Income (LMI) households due, potentially, to a range of factors such as lack of home ownership, limited credit history, or poor credit. To allow broader access to the benefits of clean, affordable solar energy, SEIA offers the following principles for our membership, policymakers, and other stakeholders in the solar economy.

Our Pledges

SEIA pledges to educate and promote its membership regarding innovations and policies that may facilitate broadening LMI participation in the solar economy.

SEIA pledges that when advocating for a solar program, there should be a low-income component of that program. Low-income solar programs and policies should be additive to existing renewable energy and energy efficiency programs, not undermine or replace them. Low-income solar programs should use existing outreach and programs to the maximum extent to build upon existing successful approaches.

SEIA pledges, to the extent practicable, to include diverse voices in decision-making processes and collaborate with diverse communities when pursuing action in state legislatures, public utility commissions, zoning boards, etc.

Suggestions

For program administrators to successfully implement and manage LMI-focused programs:

1) Education

Provide more education and data about solar benefits to lower-income communities to policy makers, as well as customers. Show the risks and benefits for low-income communities and communities of color, with visible examples.

2) Partner with Community Organizations

A successful program requires collaboration with local partners such as faith-based organizations, civic associations, community development corporations, housing organizations or other service providers to ensure that community needs and challenges are addressed and assets utilized. Putting communities at the center ensures that programs are responsive and effective and helps maximize participation.

3) Real Benefits

A successful low-income program must be designed to bring benefits directly to the low-income customer. Ideally, the participant would see a positive cash flow from day one.

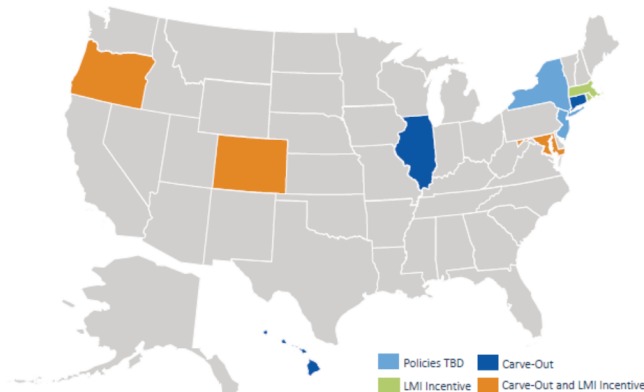
4) Sustainability and Flexibility

A successful low-income solar program must encourage long-term market development and be flexible in order to evolve to best serve the unique low-income market segment over time and as conditions and circumstances change. This requires that programs should have regular evaluation to determine effectiveness.

Map of Community Solar Programs

Community solar refers to local solar facilities shared by multiple community subscribers who receive credit on their electricity bills for their share of the power produced.

*11 states with policies in place or development to support LMI adoption of community solar
Primarily carveouts or incentives*



Source: GTM Research

SEIA Specific Activities

- SEIA holds Quarterly LMI Webinars to inform the industry and policy makers of new policy recommendations and programs
- SEIA hosts a Community Engagement Working Group for our member companies
- SEIA is a partner in the NAACP Solar Equity Initiative

Resources provided by Partner Organizations

Vote Solar

- Low Income Solar Policy Guide
- <https://votesolar.org/about-us/news-and-events/news/2018-low-income-solar-policy-guide/>

NREL

- LMI Solar Policy Basics
- <https://www.nrel.gov/technical-assistance/lmi-solar.html>

CESA

- LMI Solar and Storage Guide
- <https://www.cesa.org/assets/2017-Files/Solar-Storage-for-LMI-Communities.pdf>