



Solar Toolkits

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Solar Toolkits

March 10, 2018 in [Communities](https://www.betterenergy.org/blog/category/communities/) (<https://www.betterenergy.org/blog/category/communities/>), [Reports & Whitepapers](https://www.betterenergy.org/blog/category/reports-whitepapers/) (<https://www.betterenergy.org/blog/category/reports-whitepapers/>)

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As part of the Grow Solar Partnership, toolkits have been assembled to equip local governments in [Minnesota](https://www.betterenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/MinnesotaToolkitFeb2018_Award-Banner_Web-Version_0.pdf) (https://www.betterenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/MinnesotaToolkitFeb2018_Award-Banner_Web-Version_0.pdf), [Wisconsin](https://www.betterenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/WisconsinSolarToolkitOCT2017.pdf), (<https://www.betterenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/WisconsinSolarToolkitOCT2017.pdf>) [Iowa](https://www.betterenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Iowa-Toolkit-March2018_Reduced.pdf), (https://www.betterenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Iowa-Toolkit-March2018_Reduced.pdf) and [Illinois](https://www.betterenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/IllinoisSolarToolkit_March2018.pdf) (https://www.betterenergy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/IllinoisSolarToolkit_March2018.pdf) with information regarding solar development as it relates to planning, zoning, and permitting. The purpose of these toolkits is to provide resources that will assist communities in addressing barriers to solar energy installations in a manner tailored to each community's needs.

The following is a summary of materials that can be found in each of the toolkits.

Solar Overview

State Solar Policy Summary

Solar policy plays an important role in the development of solar energy. This document includes highlights from each state in both the regulatory arena as well as financial incentives that are available to support solar. Additionally, the State Solar Policy Summary includes statutes that enable local governments to regulate solar in planning, zoning, and permitting. This document can be used as reference guide specific to each state.

Three State Regional Analysis

The Three State Regional Analysis looks at the 3-state region of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois to identify similarities and differences in state law and typical practices in permitting, planning, and zoning for solar energy development. This document serves as the foundation for the toolkits that were developed for each state. Using this analysis, national best practices were modified so that they could be integrated into each state's regulatory framework insofar as it relates to solar development.

Planning

Comprehensive Plan Guide

The Comprehensive Plan Guide is a tool communities can use when they update their land use plans. This document outlines considerations that communities should make and identifies elements that allow for clear priorities around solar energy objectives. Model language is included to help local governments see the types of goals and policies they could include in their plans.

Zoning

Model Ordinances

All local governments with the authority to regulate zoning should include solar development in their zoning code to recognize the value of solar and alleviate any local concerns. These model ordinances offer language to address a variety of solar land uses, tailored to local conditions and priorities.

Permitting

Local Government Permitting Checklist

Providing a clear and predictable permitting process saves time and money for both contractors and municipalities. Using national best practices, a template has been created that can be adapted locally, with notes on where municipalities might choose to modify standards based on varying circumstances.

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