



**Community
Power
Accelerator**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY



Community Power Accelerator Prize Rules: Accessing Capital to Deploy Equitable Community Solar

Round 2 Phase 3 Rules

August 2024

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1 Prize Summary

The Community Power Accelerator Prize is a **\$10-million, three-phase prize** designed to fast-track the efforts of new, emerging, and expanding solar developers and co-developers to learn, participate in, and grow multiple successful community solar projects with Five Meaningful Benefits.

Teams participating in the prize are asked to develop a project portfolio of two or more projects that, in aggregate, total at least 1 MW of community solar (not exceeding 5 MW for a single facility). Competitors must develop projects that incorporate at least two of the following Five Meaningful Benefits (these are in no particular order):

- Equitable Access and Consumer Protections
- Meaningful Household Savings
- Resilience, Storage and Grid Benefits
- Community-Led Economic Development
- Solar Workforce Development.

More information about the Community Power Accelerator Prize can be found on [HeroX](#).

1.1 Prize Phases and Prizes to Win

The Community Power Accelerator Prize has three phases (Ready!, Set!, and Grow!), which are designed to build capacity and guide developers through the steps required for successful community solar project development and financing via the [Community Power Accelerator online platform](#).

Prize Phase	Duration (Anticipated)	Anticipated Number of Awards	Dollar Amounts
Phase 1: Ready!	3 months	Up to 25	\$50,000 per winning team (total prize pool: \$1,250,000)
Phase 2: Set!	4–7 months	Up to 25	\$200,000 per winning team (total prize pool: \$5,000,000)
Phase 3: Grow!	4–7 months	Up to 25	\$150,000 per winning team (total prize pool: \$3,750,000)

Phase 1 (Ready! Contest)

Total Cash Prize: \$50,000 per winning team

Closed – [See Phase 1 Winners](#)

Up to 25 winning teams will be selected for a cash award of \$50,000 each. Winning teams will have the opportunity to participate in Phase 2 of the prize. The goal of Phase 1 is to identify new, emerging, and/or expanding community solar developers and co-developers with a high potential of developing at least 1 MW of equitable community solar projects that include at least two of the Five Meaningful Benefits.

Phase 2 (Set! Contest)

Open through October 16, 2024, 5 p.m. ET

Total Cash Prize: \$200,000 per winning team

Up to 25 Phase 2 winners are eligible for award. Each winning team will receive a cash award of \$200,000 and will have the opportunity to participate in Phase 3 of the prize.

Phase 2 teams participate in the [Community Power Accelerator Learning Lab](#), a live, remote course designed to educate developers on community solar in disadvantaged communities. Additionally, Phase 2 teams are offered the opportunity to work directly with technical assistance coaches for free. Phase 2 teams will use this support to ensure their projects' readiness via the Credit-Ready Workbook. By the end of Phase 2, teams will have created and refined their digital project profiles on the [Community Power Accelerator platform](#).

Teams must win Phase 2 to participate in Phase 3.

Phase 3 (Grow! Contest)

Total Cash Prize: \$150,000 per winning team

Anticipated Timeline: August 2024 – June 2025

Up to 25 Phase 3 teams (winners of Phase 2) will be selected as Phase 3 winners, and each will receive a cash prize of \$150,000. Phase 3 teams will begin to engage fully on the Community Power Accelerator platform—an online meeting place for community solar developers, investors, and philanthropy. Using the Community Power Accelerator platform, competitors will secure investment commitments from investors and philanthropic organizations for a community solar portfolio of at least 2 projects (totally at least 1MW); each project must include at least two of the Five Meaningful Benefits.

Phase 3 includes an investor pitch event where winning teams are invited to give 5-minute pitches about their organization, team, and portfolio of projects.

To be eligible for award, competitors must secure commitments for 100% funding for their portfolio via the Community Power Accelerator Platform or other funding sources (including prize funding, if desired). If the funding source is external from the Accelerator, that source should be willing to join the Accelerator during this timeframe or provide contact information for any investors who are not a part of the accelerator.

1.2 Important Dates

Description	Date
Phase 1 Opens	July 14, 2023
Phase 1 Informational Webinar	August 8, 2023, and September 19, 2023
Phase 1 Submission Deadline	October 4, 2023, 5 p.m. ET
Phase 1 Winner Announcement	January 2024
Phase 2 Opens; Learning Lab Training Courses Begin	January 2024
Phase 2 Submission Deadline (Rolling)	<p>Teams must submit their Phase 2 submission no later than October 16, 2024, at 5 p.m. ET.</p> <p>Phase 2 teams will have an opportunity to submit their submissions for evaluation on either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 30, 2024, by 5 p.m. ET • October 16, 2024, by 5 p.m. ET.

	If a team submits to the May 30 th deadline and their submission is <u>not</u> selected for an award, they will be allowed to resubmit their revised submission for the October 16 submission deadline.
Phase 2 Winner Announcement (Rolling)	August 2024 – December 2024
Phase 3 Opens	August 2024
Investor Pitch Event	February 2025 (anticipated)
Phase 3 Submission Deadline (Rolling)	No later than June 18, 2025 ¹
Phase 3 Winner Announcement	Rolling; no later than August 28, 2025

¹ Competitors may submit their Phase 3 submission for review any time before June 18, 2025, as soon as submission requirements are met. After submission, if not selected for award, a team may resubmit their application 1 additional time (two submissions allowed per team total) up until the Phase 3 submission deadline.

2 Phase 3: Grow! Contest Rules

2.1 Introduction

The Phase 3: Grow! contest is the third in this three-contest phase series. A total of \$3.75 million in cash prizes are available in Phase 3. Below are the draft rules for competitor feedback of the Phase 3: Grow! contest. Phase 3 is only open to winners of Phase 2.

Phase 3: Grow! Benefits

Up to 25 Phase 3 teams (i.e., those that won Phase 2 awards) are eligible to receive a cash prize award of \$150,000 for completing the Phase 3 submission requirements.

2.2 Phase 3: Grow! Goal

The goal of Phase 3 is for new, emerging, and expanding community solar developers to secure 100% investment of their community solar portfolio of 2+ projects that equal in aggregate of at least 1 MW, and each of which include at least two of the Five Meaningful Benefits.²

By the end of Phase 3: Grow!, successful teams will have:

- Met with investors via the Community Power Accelerator Platform to secure and provide evidence of 100% financing for their Community Solar Project Portfolio³ (must be at least 2 projects that total in aggregate at least 1MW).
- Demonstrate and provide evidence that the team will incorporate at least 2 of the Five Meaningful Benefits into each project included in the portfolio.
- Complete all required HeroX submission elements (see Section 2.5 below)

2.3 Phase 3: Grow! Important Dates

Description	Date
Phase 3 Opens	August 2024
Phase 3 Submission Deadline (Rolling)	No later than June 18, 2025 ⁴
Phase 3 Winner Announcement	Rolling; no later than August 28, 2025

2.4 Phase 3 Prize Process

- 1. Preparation, Activation, and Submission:** Potential teams should read the entire rules document and be familiar with the goals and submission requirements for the Phase 3: Grow! contest.

To compete for a Community Power Accelerator Phase 3 prize, teams must complete and submit—via the HeroX portal—documentation for the following requirements:

² Meaningful benefits include increased equitable access and consumer protections, meaningful household savings, resilience, storage and grid benefits, community-led economic development, and solar workforce development.

³ Competitors are strongly encouraged to use the Accelerator platform to seek funding for their projects, however competitors are allowed to use funding external to the Accelerator to meet the Phase 3 funding requirement. Please see section 2.5 What to Submit - Community Power Accelerator Project Financing Confirmation Documentation Sheet description for more information.

⁴ Competitors may submit their Phase 3 submission for review any time before June 18, 2025, as soon as submission requirements are met. After submission, if not selected for award, a team may resubmit their application 1 additional time (two submissions allowed per team total) up until the Phase 3 submission deadline.

- Cover page (selected questions will be displayed publicly)
- Updated PowerPoint summary slide (public; updated from Phase 2)
- Community Power Accelerator Project Financing Confirmation Documentation Sheets for each project (minimum 2) with investor reference letters
- Project Pro Forma(s) (minimum 2)
- Phase 3 narrative, providing evidence of the incorporation of meaningful benefits, community engagement, and post prize replicability and scalability.

All submission materials must be uploaded to the [Community Power Accelerator Prize HeroX page](#) before the final Phase 3 submission deadline: June 18, 2025, at 5 p.m. ET.

- 2. Assessment:** The Prize Administrator screens submissions for eligibility and completion and assigns advisor expert reviewers to independently evaluate the content of each submission. The advisory reviewers may include federal and nonfederal subject matter experts with expertise in relevant areas. Advisory reviewers will review submissions and provide input to the Prize Administrator and DOE. The final determination of winners will take reviewer scores, discussions with reviewers (if applicable), interview findings (if applicable), and the program policy factors listed in [Appendix A.11](#) into account. DOE is the judge and final decision maker and may elect to award all, none, or some of the submissions accepted at each submission deadline.

Phase 3 submissions will be accepted, reviewed and awarded on a rolling basis as submissions are received. Competitors who submit an application may, if not awarded, resubmit their application once.

- 3. Announcement:** After the Phase 3: Grow! winners are publicly announced, the Prize Administrator will notify them and request the necessary information to distribute cash prizes.

Financial and Tax Requirements:

- Winning teams will be required to submit an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) [W-9 form](#) and automated clearing house (ACH) forms as well as signing a prize acceptance form in order for payment to be issued.

2.5 What To Submit

A complete submission package for the Community Power Accelerator Prize Phase 3: Grow! contest must include the following items:

Item #	Content	Scored Item?
1	Cover page (will be made public)	No
2	Updated PowerPoint summary slide (will be made public)	No
3	Community Power Accelerator Project Financing Confirmation Documentation Sheet (minimum 2) with investor reference letters.	Pass/Fail
4	Project Pro Forma and Coversheet (Minimum 2)	Pass/Fail
5	Phase 3 Narrative	Pass/Fail
Notes:		

- Portions of the submission package are made available to the public. These have been denoted as such. DOE does not intend to release the remaining parts of the submission to the public.

1. Cover Page (selected elements will be made public)

Complete the basic information below about your organization via the HeroX submission form.

- Submission (project) title (will be made public)
- Submission picture (.jpeg) (will be made public)
- Organization name (will be made public)
- Organization city, state (will be made public)
- Organization nine-digit zip code
- Organization website URL (will be made public)
- Point of contact information (name, job title, email, phone)
- Team members
- Partner organizations
- Portfolio details for each individual project: Project Name, Size in MW_{DC}, City, State

2. PowerPoint Summary Slide (will be made public)

One slide maximum.

Optional Template: <https://www.herox.com/CommunityPowerAcceleratorRound2/resource/1381>

Allowable Upload Format: .pdf, .ppt, .pptx

Teams must update their single-slide summary in PowerPoint that contains specific details about the submission that can be understood by a nontechnical audience. No specific template is required, but text should be readable on a standard printout and conference room projection. Teams should not include any trade secrets or commercially sensitive information that is privileged or confidential on their summary slide.

3. Community Power Accelerator Project Financing Confirmation Documentation Sheet

For each project (minimum 2) in their 1 MW+ portfolio, teams must provide a completed Project Financing Confirmation Documentation Sheet with detailed information about the type of funding received (debt, equity, philanthropic, etc.), the amount, and basic financing terms (tables 1-7).

Additionally, teams must provide signed documentation of project financing from each investor or financing organization. Teams may use the template provided in the Project Financing Confirmation Documentation Sheet (tables 8-11, as applicable) or provide a separate signed letter from each investor or financing organization.

As part of the 100% funding requirement, teams are allowed to include funding that is conditional.

Template: <https://www.herox.com/CommunityPowerAcceleratorRound2/resource/1979>

Scoring: Pass/Fail

Allowable Upload Format: .pdf

Teams should upload a PDF copy of each of their financing confirmation documentation sheet along with signed supporting investor reference letters.

Competitors are required to use the template document which can be [found here for tables 1-7](#).

Each documentation sheet must include:

- Table 1: Developer Summary
- Table 2: Project Summary
- Table 3: Project Financing Summary
- Table 4-7: Financing Summary (as applicable)

Additionally, each documentation sheet requires a signed affirmation from each Investor (Table 8-11 as applicable) or provide a separate signed letter from each investor or financing organization with the following information:

Investor Information:

- Investor Name
- Address
- Point of Contact Name
- Point of Contact Phone Number
- Point of Contact Email
- Total funds invested
- Percentage ownership stake in project
- Key conditions of agreement

Pass Criteria:

- Competitor provides completed funding questionnaires that show investment for 100% of total anticipated project costs for a minimum of 2 projects that total at least, in aggregate, 1 MW.
- For each project, all investors listed in the documentation sheet have a corresponding signed affirmation statement (Table 8-11 as applicable) or other signed letter confirming financing and basic terms.

Competitors must meet both of the above "Pass" criteria to be eligible for a Phase 3 award.

<p>Signed Investor Affirmation/Statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation that all “investor information” above is accurate • They understand the significance of “meaningful benefits” to the Project, • That the Developer has committed to provide, at minimum, at least 2 the following meaningful benefits to the Project’s community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Equitable Access and Consumer Protections ○ Meaningful household savings ○ Resilience, storage and grid benefits ○ Community-led economic development ○ Solar workforce development. • That the financing is contingent on the Project’s continued good-faith delivery of the articulated meaningful benefits, for a minimum period of [XX] years passed the project’s commissioning date. 	
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4. Updated Project Proforma(s) and Summary Cover Sheet

For each project (minimum 2) in their 1 MW+ portfolio, teams must include an updated (from Phase 2) Proforma including an overview of the financial aspects and projected outcomes of their community solar projects and a 1-page word document cover sheet highlighting key details (list below).

Template: <https://www.herox.com/CommunityPowerAcceleratorRound2/resource/1973>

Scoring: Pass/Fail

Allowable Upload Format: .xlsx, .zip

<p>Proforma:</p> <p>For each project included in the Phase 3 portfolio, teams must upload a PDF or excel copy of each of their updated project proforma.</p> <p>Teams may use the Proforma template from the learning lab.</p> <p>Each portfolio and/or project pro forma(s) must include all applicable details including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project Scope 2. Project Sources and Uses 	<p>Pass Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proforma and coversheet is credible, comprehensive and includes all of the required information as it is applicable to each project included in the portfolio. <p>Competitors must meet the above “Pass” criteria to be eligible for a Phase 3 award. It is DOE’s expectation that the proforma numbers match the commitments from financiers.</p>
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<p>3. Project Proforma 4. Project Debt 5. Project Loan 6. Project Return 7. Project Incentives (E.g., tax credits and other government subsidies)</p> <p>Coversheet:</p> <p>Teams should include a 1-page cover sheet highlighting key financial details of their projects.</p>	
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5. Narrative

Answer each of the questions in the two areas listed below. The content bullets are only suggestions to guide your responses; you decide where to focus your answers. The individual answers to the three areas do not have a word limit; however, the aggregate response to these three areas must not exceed 3,500 words, not including captions, images, figures/graphs, tables and references. A word count must be included at the end of your submission. You may also include up to 20 supporting images, figures, or graphs. The reviewers will score the questions based on the content you have provided.

Template: <https://www.herox.com/CommunityPowerAcceleratorRound2/resource/1978>

Scoring: Pass/Fail

Allowable Upload Format: .pdf

1. Phase 3 Prize Portfolio Information: Construction Planning and Meaningful Benefit Documentation

<p>Teams could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction Planning: Discuss your plans for building each of your prize portfolio projects including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Utility Interconnections – Do you have approval from the cognizant utility to connect your projects to the grid? ○ Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) – do you have your EPC finalized and approved? ○ Any outstanding roadblocks or barriers and your plan to overcome them. • Meaningful Benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A description of the meaningful benefits that each project in your portfolio⁵ offers. 	<p>Pass Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction Planning: The team is ready to begin construction on the described projects and demonstrates a comprehensive plan encompassing various aspects, such as: utility connections, engineering procurement and construction (EPC), construction timeline and anticipated connection date, as well as identification of outstanding roadblocks or barriers and their plan to overcome them. • Meaningful Benefits: At least two of the Five Meaningful Benefits are provided by each project in the portfolio. The
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⁵ Minimum 2 projects that total at least, in aggregate, 1MW

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Describe the strategies, initiatives, or programs that will be implemented to achieve these benefits. ○ Outline the metrics and indicators that will be used to measure the impact and success of these community benefits. ○ Provide documentation such as contracts, agreements, or partnership documents to provide evidence that your project will provide the meaningful benefits that you identified once constructed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Competitors <u>must</u> provide supplemental documentation in the appendix, and/or point to specific sections of their proforma as documentation. ▪ Competitors must provide detail and documentation on how they are implementing two out of Five Meaningful Benefits including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Equitable Access and Consumer Protections</u>: How much of the projects are dedicated to LMI communities? • <u>Meaningful Household Savings</u>: What is the total of estimated savings per subscriber? • <u>Resilience, Storage and Grid Benefits</u>: What additional storage options are provided by the project? How much (kWh)? Under what circumstances will storage options be utilized and for what duration? • <u>Community-Led Economic Development</u>: What is the ownership model for each project? What other strategies are used to employ wealth-building? • <u>Solar Workforce Development</u>: Please detail your workforce training program – including if you have union support. What percentage of onsite training exists within your model? Do you commit to providing at minimum a prevailing wage? What is your support to minority and women owned businesses and workforce? 	<p>narrative clearly and effectively demonstrates that subscribers will receive meaningful benefits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaningful Benefits: The described strategies, initiatives, or programs are practical and feasible, considering the project's scope, resources, and timeline. • Meaningful Benefits: The metrics are well-defined, measurable, and quantifiable, and will allow for accurate evaluation and comparison of the project's success. • Meaningful Benefits: The provided documentation, such as contracts, agreements, or partnership documents, supports the claim that the project will deliver the identified meaningful benefits beyond the project's construction. <p>Competitors must meet all of the above "Pass" criteria to be eligible for a Phase 3 award.</p>
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2. Post Prize: Future Project Portfolio, Organizational Development Growth, Meaningful Benefits

<p>Teams could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Portfolio: Describe your plan for your next projects, including a description of siting details, 	<p>Pass Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Portfolio: The description demonstrates a clear and comprehensive plan for expanding the
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<p>challenges, and support needed to support future growth. Teams may also discuss the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project Identification/Selection: Why did you select the new projects? How are you using your new projects to grow strategically? (e.g., expand into a geographic regional, reach a new demographic, internal organizational growth) ○ Partnerships: What are your plans for new partnerships or collaborations with organizations, utilities, local governments, or other stakeholders? ○ Challenges: What are development challenges you might face in your anticipated project(s)? What are your plans to overcome them or mitigate risks? ○ Support from NCSP: How could the NCSP provide your team with on-going support post-prize? (Note: additional support is not guaranteed post-prize). What are your plans to continue to utilize the Community Power Accelerator Platform? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organizational Growth: Describe the areas of organization growth. What capacities did your organization acquire during the prize that will enhance your ability to develop future solar projects? ● Scaling the Five Meaningful Benefits: How will you ensure meaningful benefits associated with future projects are equitable and inclusive for the communities you're serving? 	<p>team's community solar portfolio after the prize concludes. The plan aligns with the organization's long-term goals and showcases innovative approaches to growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Future Portfolio: The description identifies and outlines potential collaborations with organizations, utilities, or stakeholders for replicating projects in new locations. It demonstrates a strategic approach to building partnerships and leveraging existing networks – including the intention to add new projects onto the platform and identifying partners and staff to participate on the platform and learning lab. ● Organizational Growth: The submission highlights the capacities acquired by the organization, showcasing how new skills and resources have enhanced the team's ability to develop future solar projects. This can include areas such as technical expertise, project management capabilities, financial resources, or stakeholder engagement strategies among other capabilities. ● Scaling the Five Meaningful Benefits: The description presents a well-defined framework or approach to ensure meaningful benefits associated with replicated or scaled projects are equitable for the communities served. The team demonstrates a commitment to diversity and inclusion. <p>Competitors must meet all of the above "Pass" criteria to be eligible for a Phase 3 award.</p>
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2.6 How We Score

All items in the submission package, with the exception of the cover page and logistical questions, will be considered when scoring each submission. After reviewing all elements of the submission package,

expert reviewers will decide if the submission elements meet the specified “pass” criteria for each of the required submission elements. Team must receive a pass on 100% of the scoring criteria to be eligible for a Phase 3 award.

The Prize Administrator will first ensure that all submissions are eligible to compete. The Prize Administrator reserves the right to remove evidence that contains personally identifiable information (PII). The scoring of submissions will proceed as follows:

- **Screening.** The Community Power Accelerator Prize Administrator and DOE will screen each application for overall [eligibility](#) and completeness. Each submission must have the five main elements requested as part of the submission package:
 1. Cover page (selected questions will be displayed publicly)
 2. Updated PowerPoint summary slide (public)
 3. Project Funding Questionnaire with Investor Reference Letters
 4. Portfolio and/or Project Pro Forma(s)
 5. Phase 3 narrative

Only submissions that meet the eligibility criteria and include all five elements will be deemed as passing the Phase 3 screening.

- **Scoring.** A panel of expert reviewers reads, scores, and comments on each submission. For each required submission element a set of “pass” criteria has been identified. After reviewing all elements of the submission package, expert reviewers will decide if the submission elements meet the specified “pass” criteria for each of the required submission elements. Team must receive a passing score on all required the submission elements to be eligible for a Phase 3 award.
 1. Reviewers are prohibited from having personal or financial interests in, or being an employee, officer, director, or agent of, any entity that is a registered participant in this contest or having a familial or financial relationship with an individual who is a registered team.
- **Reviewer comments.** Expert reviewers also provide comments on the submissions they review. The Prize Administrator intends to provide comments to teams after the winners are announced for each phase. These comments are intended to help teams continue to improve and iterate on their work. The comments are the opinions of the expert reviewers and do not represent the opinions of DOE.
- **Interviews.** The Prize Administrator may decide to hold a short interview with a subset of the teams. Interviews would be held prior to the announcement of winners and would serve to help clarify questions the Prize Administrator may have. Attending interviews is not required, and interviews are not an indication of winning.

The final determination of winners takes reviewer scores, discussions with reviewers (if applicable), interview findings (if applicable), and the program policy factors listed in [Appendix A](#) into account. DOE is the judge and final decision maker and may elect to award all, none, or some of the submissions accepted at each submission deadline.

Appendix A: Additional Terms and Conditions

A.1 Requirements

Your submission for the Community Power Accelerator Prize is subject to the following terms and conditions:

- You must post the final content of your submission or upload the submission form online by 5 p.m. ET on June 18, 2025, before the prize's phase submission period closes. Late submissions or any other form of submission may be rejected.
- You must include all the required elements in your submission. The Prize Administrator may disqualify your submission after an initial screening if you fail to provide all required submission elements. Competitors may be given an opportunity to rectify submission errors due to technical challenges.
- Your submission must be in English and in a format readable by Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF. Scanned hand-written submissions will be disqualified.
- Submissions will be disqualified if they contain any matter that, in the sole discretion of the U.S. Department of Energy or the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), is indecent, obscene, defamatory, libelous, and/or lacking in professionalism, or demonstrates a lack of respect for people or life on this planet.
- If you click "Accept" on the HeroX platform and proceed to register for any of the prizes described in this document, these rules will form a valid and binding agreement between you and DOE and are in addition to the existing HeroX Terms of Use for all purposes relating to these contests. You should print and keep a copy of these rules. These provisions only apply to the prize described here and no other prize on the HeroX platform or anywhere else.
- The Prize Administrator, when feasible, may give competitors an opportunity to fix nonsubstantive mistakes or errors in their submission packages.
- As part of your submission to this prize, you will be required to sign the following statement:
I am providing this submission package as part of my participation in this prize. I understand that the information contained in this submission will be relied on by the federal government to determine whether to issue a prize to the named competitor. I certify under penalty of perjury that the named competitor meets the eligibility requirements for this prize competition and complies with all other rules contained in the Official Rules document. I further represent that the information contained in the submission is true and contains no misrepresentations. I understand false statements or misrepresentations to the federal government may result in civil and/or criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 and § 287, and 31 U.S.C. §§ 3729-3733 and 3801-3812.

A.2 Verification for Payments

The Prize Administrator will verify the identity and role of all competitors before distributing any prizes. Receiving a prize payment is contingent upon fulfilling all requirements contained herein. The Prize Administrator will notify winning competitors using provided email contact information for the individual or entity that was responsible for the submission. Each competitor will be required to sign and return to the Prize Administrator, within 30 days of the date on the notice, a completed NREL Request for ACH Banking Information form and a completed W9 form (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>). In the sole discretion of the Prize Administrator, a winning competitor will be disqualified from the competition and receive no prize funds if: (i) the person/entity does not respond to notifications; (ii) the person/entity fails

to sign and return the required documentation within the required time period; (iii) the notification is returned as undeliverable; (iv) the submission or person/entity is disqualified for any other reason.

In the event of a dispute as to any registration, the authorized account holder of the email address used to register will be deemed to be the competitor. The "authorized account holder" is the natural person or legal entity assigned an email address by an Internet access provider, online service provider, or other organization responsible for assigning email addresses for the domain associated with the submitted address. All competitors may be required to show proof of being the authorized account holder.

A.3 Teams and Single-Entity Awards

The Prize Administrator will award a single dollar amount to the designated primary submitter, whether consisting of a single or multiple entities. The primary submitter is solely responsible for allocating any prize funds among its member competitors or teammates as they deem appropriate. The Prize Administrator will not arbitrate, intervene, advise on, or resolve any matters or disputes between team members or competitors.

A.4 Treatment of Submission Materials

The elements of the submission that are designated public will become publicly available as part of this prize. Therefore, these elements must not include trade secrets or business-sensitive, proprietary, or otherwise confidential information.

If it is necessary to share trade secrets or business-sensitive, proprietary, or otherwise confidential information, it should only be done in an element that is NOT designated as public. Any confidential, proprietary, or privileged information must be marked as described below. Failure to comply with these marking requirements may result in the disclosure of the unmarked information under the Freedom of Information Act or otherwise.

The submission must be marked as follows and identify the specific pages containing trade secrets, confidential, proprietary, or privileged information: "Notice of Restriction on Disclosure and Use of Data: Pages [list applicable pages] of this document may contain trade secrets, confidential, proprietary, or privileged information that is exempt from public disclosure. Such information shall be used or disclosed only for evaluation purposes. [End of Notice]"

The header and footer of every page that contains confidential, proprietary, or privileged information must be marked as follows: "Contains Trade Secrets, Confidential, Proprietary, or Privileged Information Exempt from Public Disclosure." In addition, each line or paragraph containing proprietary, privileged, or trade secret information must be clearly marked with double brackets.

DOE, the Prize Administrator, and any other third-party supporting DOE in the contest assume no liability for the public disclosure of any information in the elements designated public and for any unmarked information any element NOT designated as public.

Furthermore, by making a submission and consenting to the rules of the prize the competitor is granting to DOE, the Prize Administrator, and any other third parties supporting DOE in the contest, a license to display publicly and use the elements of the submission that are designated as public and any unmarked information in the elements of the submission that are NOT designated as public for government purposes, including posting or linking elements on websites or publicizing the submissions and competitors in the media and other announcements. The competitor is granting to DOE, the Prize Administrator, and other third parties a limited license to use or disclose any properly marked information for evaluation purposes only.

A.5 Representation and Warranties

By entering, the competitor represents and warrants that:

1. The competitor's entire submission is an original work by the competitor and the competitor has not included third-party content (such as writing, text, graphics, artwork, logos, photographs, likeness of any third party, musical recordings, clips of videos, television programs or motion pictures) in or in connection with the submission, unless (i) otherwise requested by the Prize Administrator or disclosed by the competitor in the submission, and (ii) the competitor acquired the necessary rights to use and to authorize others, including DOE, to use the submission, as specified throughout the rules.
2. To the best of the competitor's knowledge, the use of the submission in the prize, including any use by DOE or the Prize Administrator does not and will not infringe or violate any rights of any third party or entity, including, without limitation, patent, copyright, trademark, trade secret, defamation, privacy, publicity, false light, misappropriation, intentional or negligent infliction of emotional distress, confidentiality, or any contractual or other rights.
3. All persons who were engaged by the competitor to work on the submission or who appear in the submission in any manner have:
 - Given the competitor their express written consent to submit the submission for exhibition and other exploitation in any manner and in any and all media, whether now existing or hereafter discovered, throughout the world;
 - Provided written permission to include their name, image, or pictures in or with the submission (or, if a minor who is not competitor's child, competitor must have the permission of the minor's parent or legal guardian) and the competitor may be asked by the prize administrator to provide permission in writing; and
 - Not been and are not currently under any union or guild agreement that results in any ongoing obligations resulting from the use, exhibition, or other exploitation of the submission.
4. The submission is free of malware.

A.6 Contest Subject to Applicable Law

All contests are subject to all applicable federal laws and regulations. Participation constitutes each participant's full and unconditional agreement to these Official Rules and administrative decisions, which are final and binding in all matters related to the contest. This notice is not an obligation of funds; the final award is contingent upon the availability of appropriations.

A.7 Resolution of Disputes

DOE is solely responsible for administrative decisions, which are final and binding in all matters related to the contest.

Neither DOE nor the Prize Administrator will arbitrate, intervene, advise on, or resolve any matters between team members or among competitors.

A.8 Publicity

The winners of these prizes (collectively, "winners") will be featured on DOE and NREL websites.

Except where prohibited, participation in the contest constitutes each winner's consent to DOE's and its agents' use of each winner's name, likeness, photograph, voice, opinions, and/or hometown and state

information for promotional purposes through any form of media worldwide, without further permission, payment, or consideration.

A.9 Liability

Upon registration, all participants agree to assume any and all risks of injury or loss in connection with or in any way arising from participation in this contest. Upon registration, except in the case of willful misconduct, all participants agree to and, thereby, do waive and release any and all claims or causes of action against the federal government and its officers, employees, and agents for any and all injury and damage of any nature whatsoever (whether existing or thereafter arising, whether direct, indirect, or consequential, and whether foreseeable or not), arising from their participation in the contest, whether the claim or cause of action arises under contract or tort.

In accordance with the delegation of authority to run this contest delegated to the judge responsible for this prize, the judge has determined that no liability insurance naming DOE as an insured will be required of competitors to compete in this competition per 15 U.S.C. § 3719(i)(2). Competitors should assess the risks associated with their proposed activities and adequately insure themselves against possible losses.

A.10 Records Retention and Freedom of Information Act

All materials submitted to DOE as part of a submission become DOE records and are subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Where necessary, materials should be marked as noted in Section A.4. Such information will be withheld from public disclosure to the extent permitted by law. Without assuming any liability for inadvertent disclosure, DOE will seek to limit disclosure of such information to its employees and to outside reviewers when necessary for review of the application or as otherwise authorized by law. This restriction does not limit the Government's right to use the information if it is obtained from another source.

Competitors will be notified of any Freedom of Information Act requests for their submissions in accordance with 29 C.F.R. § 70.26. Competitors may then have the opportunity to review materials and work with a Freedom of Information Act representative prior to the release of materials. DOE does intend to keep all submission materials private except for those materials designated as "will be made public."

A.11 Privacy

If you choose to provide HeroX with personal information by registering or completing the submission package through the contest website, you understand that such information will be transmitted to DOE and may be kept in a system of records. Such information will be used only to respond to you in matters regarding your submission and/or the contest unless you choose to receive updates or notifications about other contests or programs from DOE on an opt-in basis. DOE and NREL are not collecting any information for commercial marketing.

A.12 General Conditions

DOE reserves the right to cancel, suspend, and/or modify the prize, or any part of it, at any time. If any fraud, technical failure, or any other factor beyond DOE's reasonable control impairs the integrity or proper functioning of the prize, as determined by DOE in its sole discretion, DOE may cancel the prize. Any performance toward prize goals is conducted entirely at the risk of the competitor, and DOE shall not compensate any competitors for any activities performed in furtherance of this prize.

Although DOE may indicate that it will select up to several winners for each prize, DOE reserves the right to only select competitors that are likely to achieve the goals of the program. If, in DOE's determination, no competitors are likely to achieve the goals of the program, DOE will select no competitors to be winners and will award no prize money.

DOE may conduct a risk review, using Government resources, of the competitor and project personnel for potential risks of foreign interference. The outcomes of the risk review may result in the submission being eliminated from the prize competition. This risk review, and potential elimination, can occur at any time during the prize competition. An elimination based on a risk review is not appealable.

A.13 Program Policy Factors

While the scores of the expert reviewers will be carefully considered, it is the role of the prize judge to maximize the impact of prize funds. Some factors outside the control of competitors and beyond the independent expert reviewer scope of review may need to be considered to accomplish this goal. The following is a list of such factors. In addition to the reviewers' scores, the below program policy factors may be considered in determining winners:

- Geographic diversity and potential economic impact of projects.
- Diversity in project or program type (state program, utility-led program, third-party-developed project, community-owned project, etc.).
- Whether the use of additional DOE funds and provided resources are non-duplicative and compatible with the stated goals of this program and the DOE mission generally.
- The degree to which the submission will accelerate the adoption of best practices to provide meaningful, transformational changes in equitable access to community solar energy and its benefits among audiences and in areas that are underserved by existing efforts by the U.S. solar market.
- The degree to which the submission exhibits technological or programmatic diversity when compared to the existing DOE project portfolio and other competitors.
- The degree to which the submission is likely to lead to increased employment and manufacturing in the United States or provide other economic benefits to U.S. taxpayers.
- The degree to which the submission will accelerate transformational technological, financial, or workforce advances in areas that industry by itself is not likely to undertake because of technical or financial uncertainty.
- The degree to which the submission supports complementary DOE-funded efforts or projects, which, when taken together, will best achieve the goals and objectives of DOE.
- The degree to which the submission expands DOE's funding to new competitors and recipients who have not been supported by DOE in the past.
- The degree to which the submission enables new and expanding market segments.
- The degree to which the submission exhibits team member diversity and the inclusion of underrepresented groups, with participants including, but not limited to, graduates and students of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and other minority-serving institutions (MSIs), members operating within Qualified Opportunity Zones or other underserved communities, or members from minority business enterprises, minority-owned businesses, woman-owned businesses, or veteran-owned businesses.
- Whether the project promotes increased coordination with nongovernmental entities toward enabling a just and equitable clean energy economy in their region and/or community.

A.14 National Environmental Policy Act Compliance

This prize is subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. § 4321, et seq.). NEPA requires federal agencies to integrate environmental values into their decision-making processes by

considering the potential environmental impacts of their proposed actions. For additional background on NEPA, please see DOE's NEPA website at <http://nepa.energy.gov/>.

While NEPA compliance is a federal agency responsibility and the ultimate decisions remain with the federal agency, all participants in the Inclusive Energy Innovation Prize will be required to assist in the timely and effective completion of the NEPA process in the manner most pertinent to their participation in the prize competition. Participants may be asked to provide DOE with information on fabrication and testing of their device such that DOE can conduct a meaningful evaluation of the potential environmental impacts.

A.15 Return of Funds

As a condition of receiving a prize, competitors agree that if the prize was made based on fraudulent or inaccurate information provided by the competitor to DOE, DOE has the right to demand that any prize funds or the value of other non-cash prizes be returned to the government.

ALL DECISIONS BY DOE ARE FINAL AND BINDING IN ALL MATTERS RELATED TO THE PRIZE.

Appendix B: Background on the Community Power Accelerator Program

The Community Power Accelerator is an initiative of the National Community Solar Partnership (NCSP)⁶ that brings together investors, philanthropic organizations, developers, community-based organizations, and technical experts in one online ecosystem to accelerate the deployment of the funds needed to drive a more equitable clean energy transition.

This [online platform](#) makes it easier for developers, community-based organizations, lenders, and philanthropic organizations to identify and connect with each other based on criteria that each participant will include in their profiles. It creates a pipeline of credit-ready community solar projects—particularly those that provide benefits to underserved communities—and connects them with mission-aligned investors and philanthropic organizations to get funding.

The goal of the Community Power Accelerator is to facilitate and finance more community solar projects that provide the meaningful benefits identified by NCSP:

- Equitable access and consumer protections
- Meaningful household savings
- Resilience, storage and grid benefits
- Community-led economic development
- Solar workforce development.

The Community Power Accelerator is designed to help achieve this goal by helping new community solar developers, co-developers, and existing developers looking to expand their operations to:

- **Gain expertise:** Designed for new, small developers and community-based organizations, our Learning Lab offers online training to get you ready to start a new community solar project or program.
- **Prepare projects for funding:** Our Credit-Ready Checklist, developed with experienced solar investors, will walk you through the requirements for getting your project prepared for funding.
- **Plan your projects:** We provide free consulting services on completing the Credit-Ready Checklist.
- **Focus on equity:** We advise you on incorporating meaningful benefits for communities into your project plan and recruiting equity-focused investors and philanthropic organizations.
- **Get projects funded:** Our online platform provides a place to shop your credit-ready projects around to verified project developers, investors, and philanthropic organizations.

The Community Power Accelerator and its resources are free and open to all community solar developers, philanthropists, and investors, regardless of their participation in the Community Power Accelerator Prize.

This is the end of the rules document. Thank you for reading.

⁶ Learn more and sign up for the NCSP here: <https://www.energy.gov/communitysolar/join-national-community-solar-partnership>.