Program Guide for Solar Electric Allies

Developed by Energy Trust of Oregon

Part 5: Solar Development Assistance

Last updated November, 2019

5.1 Solar Development Assistance

The Solar Development Assistance (SDA) incentive (Form 230D) supports eligible customers with long construction or procurement timelines through the early stages of developing a solar system. The incentive is available for a limited set of specific customer and project types, detailed in ***Section 5.1.1*** below. The Solar Development Assistance incentive is designed for projects that are typically more complex or take longer to develop and is intended to partially offset the upfront cost of a qualifying Solar Feasibility Report that meets all program requirements and is produced by a solar trade ally for the customer. This site-specific report will include a solar site evaluation, preliminary system design(s), initial structural and/or electrical engineering, detailed cost benefit analysis, and enough utility interconnection due diligence to ensure a solar electric system is both technically and financially feasible. For projects that also qualify for a standard incentive, the SDA incentive can be combined with a full installation incentive with an extended reservation period of up to two years.

Effective Date for Process and Form Changes

Effective April 2, 2019, the Solar Development Assistance incentive application (Form 230D) is entered and processed via PowerClerk®. This expanded Solar Development Assistance incentive replaces several previous offerings that supported early stages of solar project development. As of April 2, 2019, the following incentive applications/offerings are retired:

- Solar Program Project Enrollment Application (Form 210A)
- Solar Electric Preliminary Incentive Application (Form 205PE)
- Solar Plus Storage Feasibility (Form 220SF)
- New Buildings Solar Feasibility Incentive Application (520SF)

Projects that are in process with these forms remain in effect in accordance with the terms of those prior incentive processes and agreements; however, Energy Trust will not accept new submittals of the above applications. Projects receiving incentives associated with the above-listed incentive applications are not eligible to request the SDA incentives described in this Chapter for the same project.

5.1.1 Project Eligibility

Solar Development Assistance applicants are only eligible to receive one SDA incentive per site and must not have received an SDA for the site before or have an active solar incentive application open for the same project.

To qualify for this incentive, the project site and the proposed solar electric system must be capable of meeting Energy Trust's Solar Electric Installation Requirements, the planned solar electric system must be roof mounted and the site must have at least 1,500 square feet of contiguous, unobstructed and unshaded roof area (except with prior program approval). The Project Owner must be an eligible non-residential customer and the owner of, or otherwise have legal rights to install the proposed solar electric system at, an eligible Oregon site and meet one or more of the following additional criteria (except with prior program approval):

Nonprofit/Governmental Project

Project Owner is a governmental or nonprofit entity.

New Building Project

Project Owner's proposed new construction or major renovation building project is enrolled in Energy Trust's New Buildings program and is in early design phase (when changes can still occur).

Utility Grant Applicant

Project Owner is a non-residential customer pursuing a Portland General Electric or Pacific Power utility grant during a future grant application-cycle.

Solar Plus Storage Project

Project Owner is a non-residential customer considering a solar electric system and is also examining potential additional customer benefits that an advanced battery energy storage system (ESS) may provide. Advanced battery energy storage systems are capable of providing additional services to both the customer and the utility grid in addition to providing backup power during an outage.

5.1.2 Solar Development Assistance Process Overview

Solar trade allies should apply for and reserve the SDA incentive on behalf of their customers prior to beginning work to develop the Solar Feasibility Report. Once the SDA incentive has been reserved, solar trade allies can begin work. Once complete, the trade ally submits the full report to Energy Trust for technical review to determine if the project meets all program requirements. Trade allies are expected to reduce the upfront cost of their services to the customer by the amount of the SDA incentive. The SDA incentive will be paid to the solar trade ally after the Solar Feasibility Report has successfully passed technical design review and been approved. The process is described below and summarized in Figure 1 on page 4.

Before beginning solar development work

Solar trade allies will use PowerClerk® to complete an SDA incentive application on behalf of the customer and submit all required documentation.

- ☐ Submit a signed Solar Development Assistance (SDA) Incentive Application (Form 230D). PowerClerk® will append the appropriate Feasibility Report Checklist (Checklist) to the application based on project type. These checklists can be found in ***Appendix B***.

- ☐ Submit bid for services to complete a Solar Feasibility Report (Report) that meets all SDA Program requirements for the project. The bid for services must show that the customer receives the benefit of the SDA incentive upfront and should cover the development cost of all materials included on the Checklist.

Once approved, a reservation letter will be issued and sent to the Project Owner and the solar trade ally.

Begin work on Solar Feasibility Report

The trade ally will have nine months from the date the Solar Development Assistance reservation letter to complete and submit a Solar Feasibility Report that meets Energy Trust requirements. This is known as the SDA Incentive Reservation Period, and failure to submit a completed Solar Feasibility Report within the allotted time may result in cancellation of the incentive funding.

Submit Solar Feasibility Report and all required documentation for review

The trade ally will submit the Solar Feasibility Report through PowerClerk® and will include all required documentation as outlined in the Checklist for the appropriate project type. If an incomplete or ineligible report is submitted, Energy Trust will notify the trade ally and will not continue with the payment process unless the report is corrected within the Reservation Period. If the report is complete the solar program will begin technical design review to determine if the project meets Energy Trust solar electric installation requirements.

Solar Development Assistance incentive payment

Solar Development Assistance incentive funds will be paid directly to the trade ally once the project passes Energy Trust's technical design review and is shown to meet all solar program requirements and all required documentation is provided, including invoicing that indicates the customer received the benefit of the SDA incentive as an upfront discount. Solar Feasibility Reports that are not complete and/or do not meet Energy Trust's requirements will not receive an incentive.

Incentive payments are approved weekly, and incentive checks are typically mailed within 30 days of Energy Trust's receipt and approval of all required documentation.

Installation incentive reservation

Once the Solar Feasibility Report has been completed by the trade ally, the solar potential of the site should be well understood. When the trade ally submits the Solar Feasibility Report to the Program for review, **the customer and trade ally may choose to also submit a solar installation incentive application to apply for a full standard incentive.**

Customers proceeding through the Solar Development Assistance pathway are eligible to receive a **two-year reservation period**. If they choose to apply later, the trade ally and customer will be required to resubmit all project documentation and will be limited to a **one-year reservation period.**

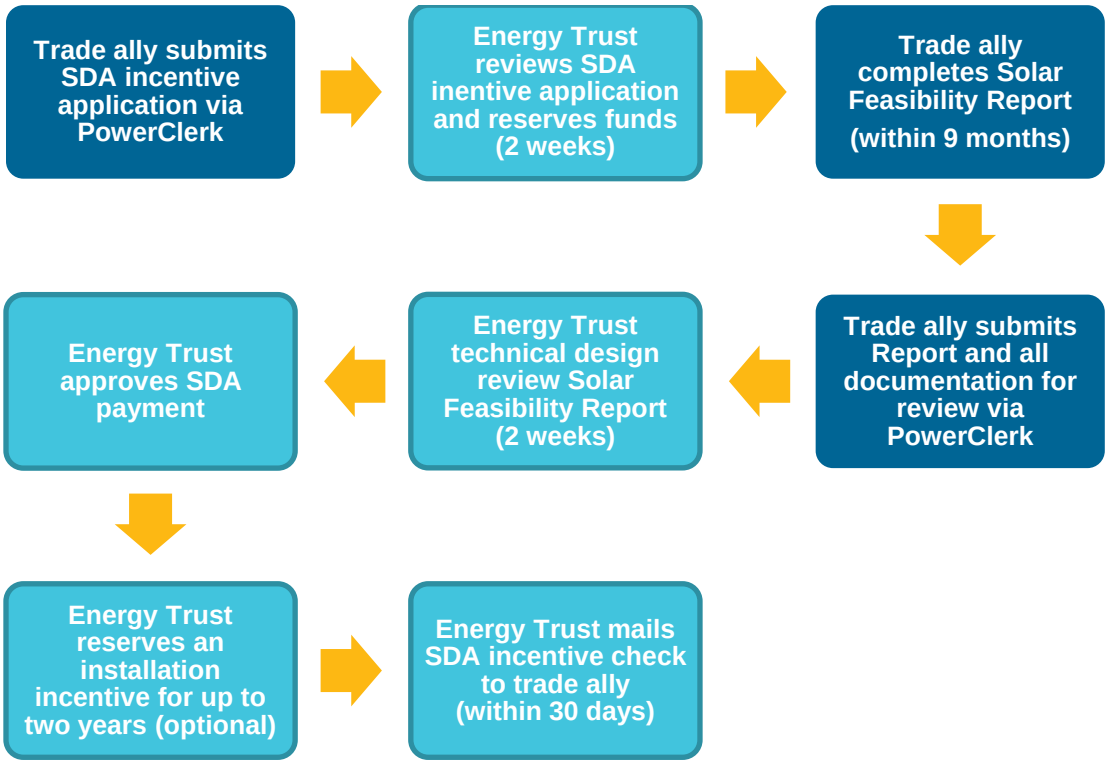

Figure 1. Solar Development Assistance review and incentive payment process

5.2 Solar Feasibility Report Required Documentation

The completed Required Study Documentation for all projects must include the documents detailed below. Solar Feasibility Report Checklists for each type of project can be found in ***Appendix B***. The trade ally and customer will receive a copy of the appropriate checklist at the time of SDA incentive reservation.

System Design Documents include, at a minimum:

- Electrical schematic diagram
- Physical layout diagram
- Solar Resource Assessment

These documents are described in more detail in ***Section 4.1.***

5.2.1 System Proposal

System Proposal Documents include, at a minimum:

Executive summary

Include a description of key findings, description of how and when the solar analysis was conducted, description of Project Owner's motivation for pursuing the project, and an anticipated timeline for project completion.

Financial summary

Estimate cost, including any estimated tax credits, accelerated depreciation, grants, and potential Energy Trust incentives, as may be applicable to the proposed system installation. Includes one or more of the following financial metrics over a 10-30 year basis: simple payback, modified internal rate of return, net present value, savings to investment ratio or return on investment

Permitting, zoning, and interconnection considerations

A brief outline of any design, permitting, zoning, structural, electrical, or interconnection considerations that may affect the potential system design, project timeline or installation cost. For more complex projects, structural and electrical engineering may be required, or an interconnection application may need to be submitted in order to determine the feasibility of solar at the site.

Additional Finding

Provide copies of any associated additional documentation including structural or electrical engineering report, roof life assessment, permit application, utility interconnection application, etc. including unlocked versions of any underlying models, spreadsheets or other analysis created or prepared as part of or in support of the feasibility study

5.2.2 **Additional Documents**

Energy Trust Incentive Documents include:

Final SDA Invoice

Solar Electric trade ally's final itemized invoice(s) detailing the final, total Study costs, subtracting the anticipated Energy Trust Solar Development Assistance incentive, and identifying the remaining net, or out of pocket, cost paid to Solar Electric Trade Ally by Project Owner

New Buildings Projects must also include:

Completed Energy Trust New Buildings Enrollment form (Form 510A)

Utility Grant applicants must also include:

Utility Grant Letter of Intent

Project Owner must provide written confirmation to Energy Trust of their intent to pursue a utility grant with Portland General Electric (Renewable Development Fund Grant) or Pacific Power (Blue Sky Community Development Fund Grant), and the application window in which they intend on applying.

Solar Plus Storage Projects must also include:

Solar Plus Storage narrative addendum (can be included in Executive Summary above)

Detailed summary of the following:

- Description of the customer motivation for choosing to pursue solar plus storage for their project and how the motivation is reflected in the design. If multiple scenarios were modelled documentation of each shall be included.
- Description of the methodology used to analyze the benefits of proposed solar plus storage system. Use actual customer interval data whenever possible.
- Summary of the Energy Storage System use cases that the chosen equipment can provide that have customer benefits. Examples may include but are not limited to: time of use bill management, solar self-consumption, demand charge reduction, preventing backfeed to the grid, backup power, resilience, etc.
- Summary of the Energy Storage System use cases that the chosen equipment can provide that have grid benefits. Examples may include but are not limited to: Demand reduction, peak reduction, demand response, voltage regulation, frequency regulation, etc.
- Summary of next development steps Project Owner intends to take or reasons for not proceeding at this time

Unlocked versions of any underlying models

Spreadsheets or other analysis created or prepared as part of or in support of the Study should be emailed to solar@energytrust.org.