

COMMERCIAL SOLAR ENERGY READY COMMUNITY

Communities interested in becoming a certified Commercial Solar Energy Ready Community should use this guide to understand the requirements before applying for certification.



ELIGIBLE COMMUNITIES

In accordance with IC 8-1-42-8, eligible communities include county and municipal units of government.

COMMERCIAL SOLAR REGULATION ADOPTION

To be certified, your community must adopt a commercial solar regulation that includes clear standards for the construction, installation, siting, modification, operation, or decommissioning of one or more solar energy systems in the community. This regulation must include:

- ✓ Standards that are not more restrictive, directly or indirectly, than the default standards outlined in IC 8-1-42.
- ✓ A clear and transparent process to identify potential commercial solar project sites.
- ✓ Does not unreasonably eliminate portions of the community for commercial solar projects.
- ✓ A fair review and approval process with a final approval that cannot be revoked.
- ✓ A specific plan for how incentive funds granted by the Center will be used for economic development within or near the project footprint, or otherwise benefits residents and businesses within or near the project footprint.

DEMONSTRATION OF COMMITMENT

As a part of the certification, your community must demonstrate a commitment, of at least 10 years from the project's start date of full commercial operation, to:

- ✓ Maintain the standards and procedural framework established in your community's commercial solar regulation.
- ✓ Maintain all applicable zoning, land use, and planning regulations.

HOW TO APPLY

To become certified as a Commercial Solar Energy Ready Community, submit your application to the Indiana Office of Energy Development using the application guidance and template available [online](#).

DEFAULT COMMERCIAL SOLAR STANDARDS

Below is a condensed summary of the voluntary default commercial solar standards outlined in Indiana Code. Applicants considering certification need to consult [IC 8-1-42](#) before applying.

Setback Requirements – A commercial solar energy system (CSE) may not be installed or located on a property unless the distance measures in a straight line from the nearest edge of the systems panels to:

- 40 feet from any highway
- 30 feet from any collector road
- 10 feet from any local road
- 50 feet from any non-participating property line
- 250 feet from a nonparticipating dwelling unless a landscape buffer is installed
- Panels cannot be more than 25 feet above ground level

These requirements can be waived with the written consent of each nonparticipating property owner.

Ground Cover & Vegetation – The project owner shall plant, establish, and maintain vegetated ground cover around and under the panels, and in project buffer areas. The use of pollinator seed mixes is encouraged. The vegetation may be required to be noninvasive and native that are appropriate to the region, economically feasible, and agreed to by the landowner.

Fencing – Fencing that encloses the project is at least 6 feet high.

Cables – Cables up to 34.5 KV located between inverters and substations shall be buried at least 36 inches below ground. Module-to-module collection cables, transmission lines, substations, junction boxes, and other infrastructure may be maintained above ground. Cables may need to be buried deeper to avoid interfering with draining tiles, or other infrastructure.

Glare Minimization – Project must minimize glare on adjacent properties and roadways, and not interfere with air or vehicular traffic.

Signal Interference – Project must minimize signal interference, such as radio reception, and weather and doppler radar.

Sound Limitations – The project may not exceed an hourly average sound level of 50 A-weighted decibels, modeled from the outer wall of a dwelling located on an adjacent nonparticipating property. The sound limitation may be waived with the consent of each adjacent nonparticipating property.

Damage to Drainage Infrastructure – All damages to waterways, drainage ditches, field tiles, or other drainage related infrastructure caused by the project must be fully repaired or replaced, so as not to impede the flow of water. All repairs must be timely, and subject to all applicable regulations.

Decommissioning and Site Restoration Plan – A project owner must submit a decommissioning and site restoration plan to the permit authority before a project may begin. More information on the plan can be found at 8-1-42-18.