



Low-Income Solar Policy Guide Provides Roadmap to Renewable Energy Savings, Jobs in Underserved Communities

First comprehensive policy guide aims to open solar access for millions of homes

New York, NY, March 14, 2016: National nonprofits GRID Alternatives, Vote Solar, and the Center for Social Inclusion today launched the Low-Income Solar Policy Guide, a new online tool offering the most comprehensive look at proven policies and program models for expanding access to solar power and solar jobs around the country. The guide is online at www.LowIncomeSolar.org

Declining solar costs and fast industry growth create opportunities to put solar energy to work providing long-term financial relief, stable employment, and improved environmental health in underserved communities. The guide, aimed at policymakers and community leaders, shows how targeted policies at national scale can open solar access for many of America's 6 million affordable housing units and 22 million owner-occupied households defined as low-income.

"Today we have affordable solar and other new clean energy options at our disposal, and we need new energy policies to match. It's time to go beyond simply protecting low-income customers to policies that truly empower them," said Jon Wellinghoff, partner at Stoel Rives and past Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. "Having more empowered customers generating electricity, consuming less, and actively participating in our shared energy system will lead to a cleaner, more robust, and lower-cost grid for everyone."

Fully enabling low-income access in America's solar surge and expanding solar workforce opportunities requires policies and programs specifically designed to address the unique barriers faced by these communities. The guide provides an overview of those barriers; key principles such as consumer protection and deep financial savings that should underpin any policy; and a suite of policy tools like direct incentives, on-bill financing, and green banks that are currently being used in successful programs around the nation.

"Solar is a technology that benefits everyone," said Rhone Resch, president and CEO of the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA). "By providing stable electricity prices below local utility rates, solar energy can substantially reduce the energy burden of low-income households. We're confident that with the right policies in place, solar will continue to grow all across America, bringing with it well-paying local jobs and the cleaner air quality that every American, socioeconomic status aside, deserves."

The Low-Income Solar Policy Guides also takes a look at some of the most successful policies and programs both for single-family, multifamily and community solar put in place in states and local governments, including:

- California's Single-Family Affordable Solar Homes (SASH) and Multifamily Affordable Solar Housing (MASH) Programs,
- Colorado's Community Solar Gardens Act
- Massachusetts' Green Communities Act of 2008 and Solar Loan Program
- New York State's Green Jobs-Green New York Act of 2009, NY-Sun's Affordable Solar Program, and Community Distributed Generation Program
- Washington, D.C.'s Sustainable Energy Utility's Small-Scale Solar Initiative/Solar Advantage Plus Program



"To combat climate change and reduce air pollution, all our communities need affordable and extensive access to renewable energy," said California Senate President pro Tempore Kevin de León. "Early policy efforts in California like the Single-family Affordable Solar Homes (SASH) program proved that we can unlock solar access for our most disadvantaged communities. This policy guide shows a path forward to extend this access to low-income residents, renters, and homeowners across America."

The Low-Income Solar Policy Guide launched today at a Manhattan briefing featuring senior representatives from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, Connecticut Green Bank, and Environmental Defense Fund. A similar launch event and panel discussion featuring three Members of Congress and senior representatives from the White House and GW Solar Institute will take place in Washington, D.C. tomorrow.

CONTACT:

GRID Alternatives: Julian Foley, jfoley@gridalternatives.org, 510-731-1188

Vote Solar: Rosalind Jackson, rosalind@votesolar.org, 415-817-5061

Center for Social Inclusion: Anthony Giancatarino, agiancatarino@thecsi.org, 212-248-2785

###

About GRID Alternatives

GRID Alternatives is America's largest non-profit solar installer bringing clean energy technology and job training to low-income families and underserved communities through a network of community partners, volunteers, and philanthropic supporters. GRID has installed over 6,500 rooftop solar systems with a combined installed capacity of 22.6 megawatts, saving \$174 million in lifetime electricity costs, preventing 484,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions, and providing over 5,400 people with solar training. For more information, visit www.gridalternatives.org

About Vote Solar

Vote Solar is a non-profit organization working to combat climate change and foster economic development by bringing solar energy into the mainstream nationwide. www.votesolar.org

About Center for Social Inclusion

The Center for Social Inclusion (CSI) works to identify and support policy strategies to transform structural inequity and exclusion into structural fairness and inclusion. We work with community groups and national organizations to develop policy ideas, foster effective leadership, and develop communications tools for an opportunity-rich world in which we all will thrive no matter our race or ethnicity. www.centerforsocialinclusion.org