Program Guide for Solar Trade Allies

Developed by Energy Trust of Oregon

Part 5: Solar Incentive Application Process

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5.1 Applying for Installation Incentives

Trade allies are expected to understand the Program's incentive application submission procedures, the required application paperwork, and the review and approval process to receive Standard Solar Program incentives. The basic steps of the application, review and approval process are shown in Figure 1.

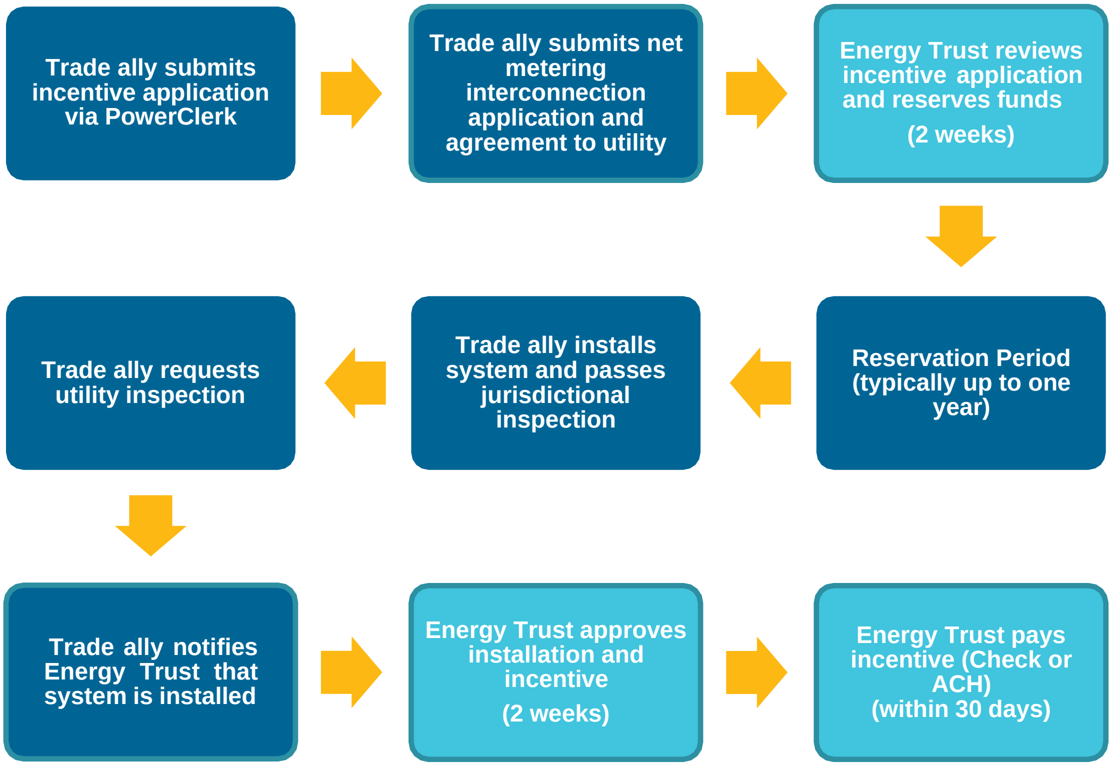

Figure 1. Typical solar application, review, and approval process

5.1.1 Applying for incentives on behalf of customers

Incentive rates are subject to change. Incentive reservations for qualifying projects are subject to funding availability and processed on a first come, first served basis. The incentive reservation period is one year for residential projects and two years for Solar Development Assistance ("SDA") and commercial projects. The Program will consider extensions of six months (residential projects) and one year (SDA and commercial projects) if requested and approved on a case-by-case basis.

Incentive applications are submitted by the trade ally using the PowerClerk® online project management and tracking system. Typically, customers should not submit solar applications, unless otherwise directed by program staff.

Trade allies are required to participate in mandatory PowerClerk® video training and will receive PowerClerk® logins for designated employees after signing a PowerClerk® user agreement. Information can be found on the Energy Trust website.

PowerClerk® allows trade allies to enter project information through a secure web environment. Based on the inputs, PowerClerk® will generate a pre-filled incentive application form to be signed electronically using DocuSign® and then submitted along with electronic versions of all other required documentation.

A complete application package includes, at minimum, the following elements:

Incentive application form

Appropriate application form for the project type, filled out in its entirety and signed by all necessary parties. Typically, the incentive application will be signed electronically using DocuSign®. If it's necessary to print and sign a paper copy, it should be submitted in its entirety, with all pages scanned in, as a single document.

Solar resource assessment

A report from an approved solar resource assessment tool showing the performance impact of shading and non-ideal tilt and orientation.See **Energy Trust website** under Approved Solar Resource Tools for information on acceptable shade evaluation methods.

Schematic diagram

Detailed system design drawing that accurately depicts all planned electrical components including the quantity, manufacturer and entire model numbers for modules, inverters and battery storage systems, as well as the main service panel and utility point of interconnection. Include module series/parallel wiring, conductor and ground wire types and sizing, length of wire runs, conduit types and sizing, AC & DC breaker sizing and voltage drop calculations.

Layout diagram

Physical layout map that accurately depicts the locations of installed modules and inverter(s), location of all applicable electrical panels and meters, roof or installation site layout, pre-existing renewable energy systems, and the location where the lowest TSRF measurement was taken.

Additional documentation to demonstrate project eligibility and compliance with Program requirements, as requested through PowerClerk® or by Program staff

5.1.2 Submitting applications on time

Complete applications will be reviewed in the order in which they are received and must include all required application documents and be signed by all necessary parties. Because incentive funds are not reserved until Energy Trust's review is complete and an incentive reservation letter has been issued, it is imperative that trade allies ensure that all required documents are submitted together in order to avoid delays in the application review process.

To apply for and reserve funding for any solar system installation, the incentive application package must be submitted to program staff ***BEFORE*** a trade ally begins installing the system. Systems installed prior to Energy Trust's receipt and approval of an incentive application will not be eligible for incentives. Unless Energy Trust issues an incentive reservation letter following its review of an incentive application, there is no commitment by Energy Trust to reserve funding for that project.

5.1.3 Application review and incentive reservation

A complete incentive application package must be submitted for review **BEFORE** a trade ally begins installing a system. The review process is intended to ensure a customer is eligible to receive an Energy Trust incentive and may help protect the trade ally from purchasing equipment or doing other installation preparation work for a system or customer that may not meet Program requirements.

Program staff will review the application for completeness and eligibility. Applications may then be selected for technical review by an independent, third-party system verifier. The technical review is intended to validate whether the system design, as submitted, appears to meet Program requirements. All projects seeking Energy Trust incentives must meet **Solar +Storage Design & Installation Requirements** and may be selected for technical design review.

Energy Trust will prioritize technical reviews based on project characteristics, incentive type, customers served, and the trade ally contractor’s status and performance record.

Projects that do not receive an up-front technical review may later be subject to spot-check reviews to support quality assurance and trade ally best practices. If a system is determined not to meet program requirements, either through a technical review or during system verification, the project will **NOT** be eligible to receive an incentive.

Timing of review process

Energy Trust’s application review process typically takes up to ten business days, but can take longer if the submitted incentive application is incomplete or includes incorrect information, or if there are concerns with Program eligibility or the system design.

Incomplete and incorrect applications

If a submitted incentive application is incomplete or appears not to meet eligibility requirements, the trade ally will be notified and asked to submit additional information. The trade ally has 30 days from the date of notification to submit the requested information via PowerClerk®. If the requested information is not received within the 30-day period, Energy Trust may cancel the partial application and notify the trade ally and the customer. The trade ally is welcome to reapply for the customer later, but the incentive amount and project documentation will not be saved.

Notification of incentive reservation and any required revisions

Once Energy Trust completes its review of a qualifying application, an Incentive Reservation letter will be sent to the system owner and trade ally. After receipt of this letter, the trade ally may move forward with system installation.

The Incentive Reservation will reference the project site, system size, reserved incentive amount and the reservation period. In addition to the reservation letter, the trade ally may also receive notice of any comments on the system design from the verifier, as well as the verifier's contact information. If a submitted incentive application requires revisions to the design to meet installation requirements, the trade ally must incorporate those required revisions into the design and the installed system. If a system is determined not to meet program requirements, either through a technical review or during system verification, the project will **NOT** be eligible to receive an incentive.

System design revisions during the reservation period

Pre-approval is *not* required for system design revisions. If the system owner and trade ally make any changes to the previously submitted system design during the reservation period, or system design revisions are required, the trade ally must revise the system components and cost through PowerClerk® and submit updated as-built documents when notifying Energy Trust that the system is installed and has passed jurisdictional inspection. As described below (***Section 5.2.2***), the trade ally will be asked to upload all required accompanying as-built design documentation. The final approved incentive amount will be confirmed upon program review.

Other revisions during the reservation period

Only system components and documentation can be revised directly through PowerClerk®. If you need to revise other application information—such as correcting the customer's name, address or utility or reassigning the payee—please contact program staff directly to supply the updated information. Program staff will advise you on what documentation is required for the proposed revision, if any. Energy Trust incentive agreements and incentive reservations cannot be assigned without Energy Trust permission. If the trade ally is informed that the system owner or host information may be changing, the trade ally must alert Energy Trust inorder to discuss the incentive agreement obligations.

5.2 Installation Requirements

All installations performed by a trade ally must meet the **Solar + Storage Design and Installation Requirements** in effect at the time of incentive reservation in order to be eligible for Program incentives. To qualify for incentives, installations will be reviewed by EnergyTrust to verify compliance with Program requirements. See ***Section 5.3*** below for more information on Energy Trust's installation verification processes.

5.2.1 Timing of installation

The incentive application package must be submitted to program staff ***BEFORE*** a trade ally begins installing the system. Systems installed prior to Energy Trust's receipt and approval of an incentive application will not be eligible for incentives.

Installation of a project may begin at any point after submitting the incentive application package. However, Energy Trust recommends that trade allies do not begin work until an incentive reservation has been made. Until Energy Trust issues an Incentive Reservation letter in response to a submitted application, there is no commitment by Energy Trust to reserve any incentive funding for that project, and work completed is at the trade ally's risk.

If a battery installation is delayed, please check in with Program staff at solar@energytrust.org.

5.2.2 Prior to trade ally notifying Energy Trust that a project is submitting an installed project for approval

The trade ally will notify Energy Trust through PowerClerk when a system is fully installed, has passed jurisdictional inspection, and is ready for program approval. Prior to notifying Energy Trust, the trade ally should complete the following tasks:

Pass jurisdictional inspections

Trade allies must successfully pass any and all jurisdictional inspections requiredby the city or county where the project is located. Trade allies must provide the approved jurisdictional inspection when notifying Energy Trust of project installation.

Initiate net-metering agreement with the utility

Prior to submitting a project for approval, the trade ally and the system owner orhost must initiate the net metering process with the utility.

The system owner or host is ultimately responsible for executing the agreement for net metering with their utility, but the trade ally is responsible for obtaining andverifying the relevant utility's current net metering requirements and supporting the customer in completing.

Pacific Power customer service number: (888) 221-7070

Portland General Electric customer service number: (800) 542-8818

Update incentive application with as-built design documents and jurisdictional inspection approval

Trade allies are required to document any system revisions with as-built designs.If a system's components, size, wiring, shading or layout change, the trade ally will need to reflect these revisions with an updated electrical schematic, physical layout diagram and/or shading report. When notifying Energy Trust that the project has been installed, the trade ally will be asked to update the system components and description in PowerClerk and upload any revised documents, as well as upload the jurisdictional inspection approval.

Provide customer with full system warranty

Trade allies must provide the system owner with a written warranty that guarantees, at a minimum, that the system installation and equipment shall be free from all defects in workmanship and materials for at least two years from the date of finalapproved jurisdictional inspection. The warranty must cover all labor for repairs resulting from workmanship or equipment defects.

Complete customer education

Trade allies must instruct the system owner in the operation and maintenance of the system, including how to identify if the system is operating normally, what to do in case of poor performance, routine maintenance activities and emergency shut down and start up procedures. Trade allies must provide a customer manualthat complies with the **Solar +Storage Design and Installation Requirements**.

Complete remote verification report

Energy Trust uses SiteCapture, a third-party software application, to document system installations. Trade allies that have been enrolled in the remote verification process are required to complete a remote verification report prior tosubmitting a project for approval.

5.3 Verification and Approval Process

Prior to incentive payment approval, projects may be selected for verification to ensure it complies with Energy Trust's Solar +Storage Design and Installation Requirements . Energy Trust contracts with one or more independent, third-party system verifier to review designed and installed solar systems and make recommendations as to whether systems meet Program requirements.

Verification may include an onsite visit from the verifier or a desk review of a Remote Verification Report submitted by a trade ally. As with technical design reviews , Energy Trust will prioritize system verification based on project characteristics, incentive type, customer type, and the trade ally contractor's status and performance record. Energy Trust's verification is not a health and safety inspection, and not all projects receive a verification, which is one reason why projects are required to pass their jurisdictional inspections first. Instead, the role of the verifier is to determine whether the verified system appears to meet Program requirements and to support installation best practices among trade allies. Among other things, the verifier compares the system design to the system installed, helps Energy Trust identify issues that might affect system performance or shorten the anticipated 20-year operating life, and confirms that the trade ally has provided the required customer manual, and surface opportunities for improvement in trade ally installation and quality management practices.

5.3.1 On-Site verifications

Scheduling onsite verifications

If a solar project is selected for an onsite verification, Energy Trust staff will notify the trade ally and verifier and place the project in *Verification Requested* status in PowerClerk®. The trade ally should coordinate with the verifier to schedule the site visit. Either the trade ally or their customer must be present during the verifier's site visit.

Site visit documentation

During a required Energy Trust site visit, the verifier will document the verification result using SiteCapture. After completing the site visit, the verifier will provide review comments and indicate whether the installation has been verified or if corrections are required. Program staff will review the results and, if approved, issue an *Installation Verified* notice to the trade ally.

5.3.2 Remote verifications

Enrolling in the remote verification process

The program uses a platform called SiteCapture to allow trade allies to document installations in lieu of completing an onsite verification. Active trade allies in good standing will be enrolled in the remote verification process. Trade allies will be selected based on application volume and installation track record. The Program will provide each trade ally with a SiteCapture login and schedule time to train installers on how to document the system with the remote verification form.

To be considered for the remote verification process, new trade allies must have completed installation with verification of at least ten solar installations. The last five ofthese projects must have been completed in the previous six-month period with no required corrections. Then, the trade ally may contact the Program to requestenrollment in the remote verification process.

Remote verification process

Trade allies approved for remote verification are still required to submit incentive applications for Energy Trust's review and incentive reservation prior to beginning work on a project. Once a project is complete,the trade ally is required to complete a remote verification report in SiteCaptureand submit it to Energy Trust by uploading the document to PowerClerk® whenthe project is ready for installation approval

Independent Verifier review of remote verification reports

The Program will select some remote verification reports for desk review by an independent verifier. Projects selected for desk review will be placed in *Remote Verification* status in PowerClerk®.

5.3.3 Corrections

Required installation corrections

If the verifier finds that the installation does not meet Program requirements, Energy Trust will notify the trade ally with a *Corrections Required* or *Remote Corrections Required* notice through PowerClerk®. Trade allies are expected to make all the required corrections *within 30 days of notification*.

Once the corrections have been made, the trade ally must submit revisions to the remote verification report or contact the verifier to schedule a new site visit.

A verifier may also find *minor corrections* to be fixed. Major vs. minor corrections can be found in ***Appendix C***. Minor corrections do not require that the system be inspected again, and payments can be made to the trade ally prior to the minor correction being made.

Repeat or unresolved corrections

If correction(s) identified by the verifier have been repeatedly identified on the trade ally's previous projects or if a trade ally fails to resolve a required correction within 60 days, the Program may, at its discretion, place the trade ally on **Disciplinary Probation** (see ***Section 2.6***). If the violation is particularly egregious or chronic, the trade ally may be subject to **Suspension** (see ***Section 2.7***) or **Termination (*Section 2.8*)**.

5.4 Payment of Incentives

Energy Trust will begin processing the incentive payment once a trade ally notifies the Program in PowerClerk® that the system is installed, and the Program approves the installation.

As described in ***Section 4.3***, some projects may be selected for onsite verification or a verifier desk review of a remote verification report will be placed in *Verification Requested* or *Remote Verification* status before receiving Program approval.

5.4.1 Timing

Incentive payments are approved weekly, and incentive checks are typically mailed within 30 days of Energy Trust's approval of project installation.

5.4.2 Incentive payee

Business and third-party owned projects

Incentive payments will be made to the payee indicated in the *Payee* section of the signed and submitted ***Form 220*** incentive agreement. The submitted application packet must include an Energy Trust ***Substitute W9*** or an IRS Form

W9 for the designated payee; however, if Energy Trust has a current W9 for the payee already on file, then it is not necessary to resubmit a W9. A trade ally designated as the *Payee* may receive incentive payments for multiple projects in a single check. The individual project incentive amounts will be listed on the check stub.

Customer-owned residential projects

For customer-owned residential projects, the trade ally is always the designated payee. The trade ally is required to reduce the customer's project cost by an amount equivalent to the incentive. The trade ally may not charge the full project cost and reimburse the customer with the value of the incentive after the trade ally receives the incentive payment from Energy Trust.

If multiple projects are approved in the same week, a trade ally may receive incentive payments for all those projects in a single check. The individual project incentive amounts will be listed on the check stub.

5.4.3 Questions about status of incentive payment

Energy Trust asks trade allies to wait the full 30 days before contacting the Program about the status of an incentive payment. If a trade ally discovers an overdue or missing incentive payment, they should contact Program staff at solar@energytrust.org to resolve the situation.