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OKI Achieves SolSmart Designation for Encouraging Solar Energy Growth

OKI Regional Council of Governments (OKI) has received a Silver designation from the national SolSmart program for helping local governments across the Greater Cincinnati area make it faster, easier and more affordable to go solar.

“We are proud to recognize OKI as the first regional organization in Ohio, Kentucky or Indiana to achieve SolSmart designation,” said Theresa Perry, Program Director at The Solar Foundation. “The Council of Governments is leading the OKI region to a clean energy future by providing education, technical assistance, and coordination. We encourage cities and counties in their region to work with OKI and the SolSmart program to achieve their clean energy goals.”

The SolSmart designation recognizes OKI for helping area communities remove obstacles to solar energy growth at the local level. OKI has provided guidance to local governments through best practice development for building and zoning permitting, encouraging solar ready design, engaging finance institutions working on innovative funding options, and working with local utilities to provide interactive solar mapping tools for property owners across the region.

“OKI is honored and excited to receive the SolSmart Silver designation,” OKI CEO Mark Policinski said. “Our agency has worked with our member governments over the past few years to develop resources and provide training to increase deployment of solar energy systems in the Greater Cincinnati area.”

[SolSmart](#) is led by The Solar Foundation and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office. SolSmart provides no-cost technical assistance to help local governments encourage solar energy development. More than 390 municipalities, counties, and regional organizations have achieved designation as SolSmart Gold, Silver, or Bronze since the program launched in 2016.

Commissioner David L. Painter
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The SolSmart designation recognizes both recent accomplishments and years of leadership from OKI in advancing solar energy growth in the region. This includes:

- Solar Ready II, <https://www.oki.org/plans-and-programs/solar-ready-ii-program/> a tool that aids in determining the solar readiness of a structure across the OKI region. Solar Ready II provides steps for homeowners to go solar, best management practices for local governments, and an extensive resource library. Additionally, OKI hosted workshops and training for a variety of audiences, including zoning administrators, building code officials, financial institutions and real estate professionals.
- In 2016, OKI updated their Elements of an Effective Local Comprehensive Plan guide, adding an Energy element. The guide recommends that each community consider energy use and the promotion of clean, renewable energy sources as they develop their long-range planning. OKI expanded further on this initiative through the multi-year Local Energy Planning Project, which produced energy plans for eight local governments in the region, and funded initial implementation steps taken by the communities. These plans stand as testaments to the value of integrating the topic of energy into the local planning process, and how communities benefit from local governments taking a proactive role in promoting clean energy and energy efficiency.

OKI now plans to expand its outreach to help more communities in the OKI region achieve SolSmart designation. Municipalities or counties interested in technical assistance on solar energy may contact Andy Meyer at ameyer@oki.org or (513) 619-7705.

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