

DOCKETED

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California Energy Commission

California Automated Permit Processing (CalAPP) Program

February 8, 2022



Agenda

- Welcome
- Overview
- Guest Presentation from NREL
- Program Design Proposals
 - Eligibility
 - Application process
 - Grant award structure
 - Allowable costs
- Public Comment
- Next Steps





Virtual Housekeeping

- Webinar conducted remotely via Zoom and is being recorded
- 3 ways to comment
 - Use the “raise hand” feature in Zoom
 - Over the telephone: dial *9 to “raise hand” and *6 to mute/unmute your phone line
 - Type your question in the Q&A window
 - Limit comment to 3 minutes per commenter or organization per topic
- Written comments due **February 22, 2022**
 - Submit through the [e-commenting system \(21-SOLAR-01\)](https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Ecomment/Ecomment.aspx?docketnumber=21-SOLAR-01):
<https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Ecomment/Ecomment.aspx?docketnumber=21-SOLAR-01>
 - Subscribe to the [CalAPP List Serve](https://www.energy.ca.gov/calapp): <https://www.energy.ca.gov/calapp>



CalAPP Program Overview

Legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senate Bill 129 (Skinner, Budget Act of 2021)• "...support a grant program for cities, counties, or cities and counties to establish online solar permitting."
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$20 Million from General Fund• Up to \$1 Million for Administrative Costs
Funding Deadlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Available for encumbrance/expenditure until June 30, 2023• Available for liquidation until June 30, 2027
Timeline Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applications available by June 2022



Guest Presentation From NREL





SolarAPP+

The US Permitting Solution



SolarAPP+ is a collaborative effort to accelerate rooftop solar adoption by making it easier for local governments to quickly and safely approve standardized rooftop PV projects for installation using NREL's permitting software.

SolarAPP+ is free for AHJs to adopt and is supported by small admin fees paid by installers.

Local Governments and Rooftop Solar Are Allies

Shared Values:

- Safety and quality
- Local resilience
- Economic development
- Environmental goals

Safe & efficient solar adoption experiences create growth

- Plan review efficiency is difficult due to volume
- Homeowners want certainty
- New, smart home tech is emerging
- Code is always changing



SolarAPP+ Eligibility

SolarAPP+ can cover standardized systems as defined [here](#).

Current Support Parameters

- Residential PV
- Approved equipment
- NEC 2017 / 2018 i-Codes
- California Electrical Code
- California Residential Code
- Bus <225A
- Service <400A
- Main panel upgrades
- PV systems <4PSF
- Single phase utility supply
- No wood shake roofs
- No metal roofs w >15PSF snow load

Support In Progress

- NEC 2020 (Release in Jan 22)
- 2021 I-Codes (Release in Jan 22)
- Residential storage (Piloting)

Future Roadmap: standalone storage, EV chargers, building integrated solar, and more...



SolarAPP+ in California

Adopted

- Menifee, CA
- Pleasant Hill, CA
- Simi Valley, CA
- Sonoma County, CA

Piloting

- **San Ramon, CA**
- **Stockton, CA**
- Benicia, CA
- Beaumont, CA
- Modesto, CA



SolarAPP+ Pilot Statistics

3,300+

Residential rooftop PV permits approved to date

200+

Permits approved to date for Solar+Storage projects

No time added

to inspections of PV systems in the field, with comparable inspection passage rates to traditional inspections

Projects submitted through SolarAPP+ were installed and inspected

12 days faster

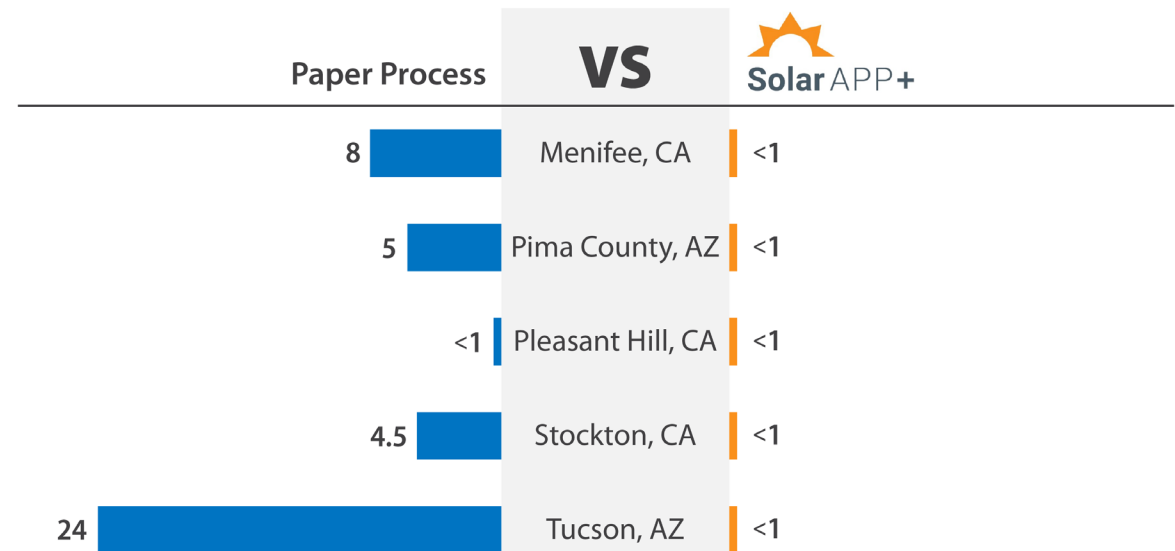
on average than projects using the traditional process

By providing instantaneous review SolarAPP+ has reduced the average permit review time to

less than 1 day

saving jurisdictional staff over **3,000 hours** in review

Median Business Days for Permit Review



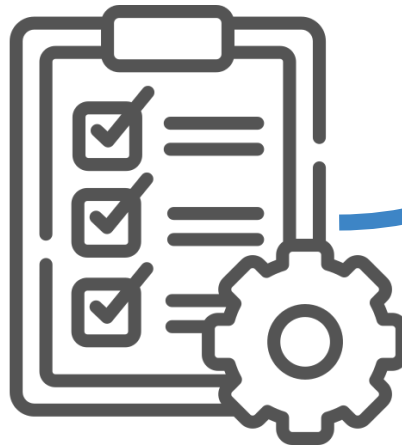
SolarAPP+ Flow

Installer submits an application with design specifications through SolarAPP



2

SolarAPP checks the application to ensure the system design is code compliant



3

Code compliant applications are issued a permit instantly after fee payment

[\(Review sample approval docs here\)](#)



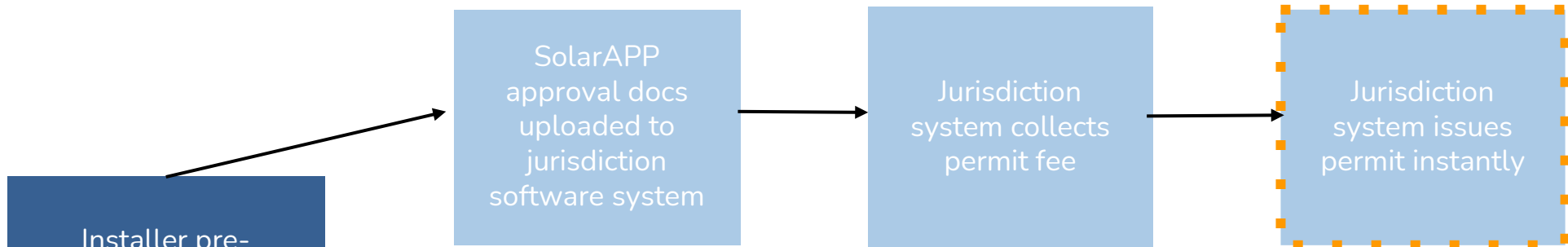
Adoption Options

SolarAPP+ Software

Existing Software

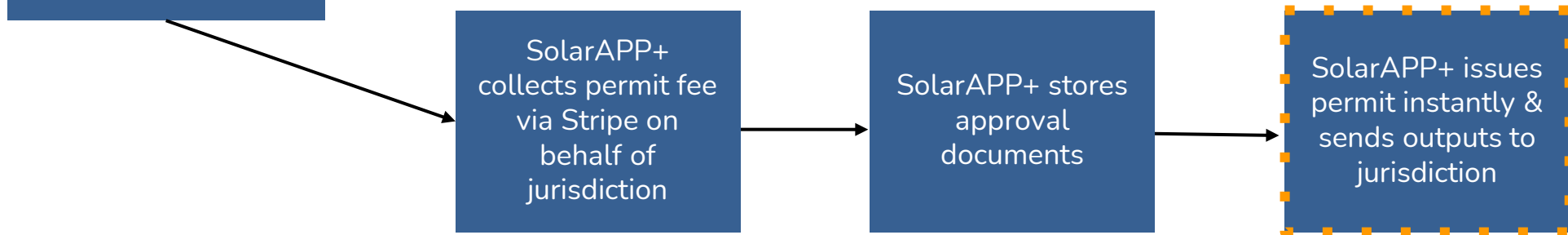
Pathway A: Incorporated into Existing Permitting Software

(For already online jurisdictions)



Pathway B: Stand Alone SolarAPP+

(For email and in-person jurisdictions)



Four Steps to Adopting SolarAPP+



Select the Right Integration

- SolarAPP can be set up to:
- **integrate** with your existing online permitting software
 - **stand alone** as a complete online permitting solution



Input Local Settings

- These include:
- Permitting contacts
 - AHJ boundaries
 - Local wind and snow variables
 - Model code years
 - Terms and conditions



Setup Instant Permit Workflow

- Depending on your integration, either:
- Set up an instant permit application in your software
 - Set up permit payments in SolarAPP



Launch

- This involves:
- Inviting 1-3 installers to use your SolarAPP permitting process
 - Opening up SolarAPP+ permitting to all installers

Next Steps

Register your interest at solarapp.nrel.gov/register.

Join us for an upcoming SolarAPP+ demo:

- Thursday, February 10th , 10am PT
- Tuesday, February 22nd, 11 AM PT
- Thursday, March 10th, 10 AM PT

Learn more about SolarAPP+:

- SolarAPP+ Help Center: help.solar-app.org
- Contact Us: team@solar-app.org
- SolarAPP+ Inspection Training: <https://cleanenergytraining.org/products/inspecting-a-solarapp-system>.

SolarAPP Outreach Materials

- Website:
 - <https://solarapp.nrel.gov/>
- Pilot Results:
 - <https://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy22osti/81603.pdf>
- Demonstration webinar:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wMDZYo7wf4I&t=1869s>
- Where is SolarAPP+ available?
 - <https://help.solar-app.org/article/108-where-is-solarapp-available>.
- Piloting webinar:
 - <https://youtu.be/iaocESF9llg>.
- SolarAPP Benefits Memo:
 - <https://www.thesolarfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/SolarAPP-Benefits-OnePager.pdf>

Questions and Thank You!

For more information contact:

solarapp@nrel.gov

team@solar-app.org

www.nrel.gov

NREL is a national laboratory of the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, operated by the Alliance for Sustainable Energy, LLC.





Questions on SolarAPP+





Program Design Proposals





Eligibility



Type (Total in CA)	Example(s)
City (482)	City of Los Angeles, Town of Los Gatos, City of San Diego
County (58)	County of Tehama, County of Los Angeles, County of Solano
City and County (1)	San Francisco



Application Process

- Applications will be accepted via electronic submittal
- Application planned to be a simple “check-box” style application form to include:
 - Applicant details
 - Funding tier acceptance
 - Signature agreeing to terms
- Staff anticipate issuing notice of a grant funding opportunity in June of 2022
- CEC will issue a notice of award for complete applications, awarding funds on a first come, first served basis



Application Process

- CEC will continue to accept applications until all funds are encumbered or no later than approximately 45 days prior to the encumbrance deadline of June 30, 2023
- All funds must be expended, and final invoices provided to CEC in advance of the liquidation deadline of June 30, 2027
- No new awards can be made after June 30, 2023. Be sure to apply promptly after a grant funding opportunity is released!



Grant Award Structure

Applicant
Submits
Application

CEC Staff
Approves
Application for
Funding

Awardee
Adopts
Permitting
Platform and
completes all
grant activities

Awardee
submits invoice
for CEC staff
review,
approval, and
disbursal of
funding



Allowable Costs

Proposed Funding Allocation

Applicant Population	Maximum Award Amount
Less Than 50,000	\$40,000
50,000 to 99,999	\$60,000
100,000 to 200,000	\$80,000
Greater Than 200,000	\$100,000



Allowable Costs

Proposed Eligible Costs

- Staff resource costs associated directly with the adoption and launch of an automated, online permitting platform, including:
 - In-house staff time, including IT resources
 - Third-party consultation services
- In-house staff time spent on training and development specific to the online, automated permitting platform
- Costs to train installers or other parties involved in the permitting process
- Note: Only activities conducted during the grant term may be reimbursed



Allowable Costs

Proposed Ineligible Costs

- Hardware and computer equipment
- Maintenance and subscription costs for permit tracking software
- Any costs incurred or activities conducted prior to award of the grant
- Typically excluded items such as food for training events
- All other costs not proposed as eligible



Allowable Costs



Proposed Payment Process

- Funding awardee submits payment invoice to CEC following launch of permitting platform and completion of all grant activities including any associated training
 - Up to 100% of eligible costs or maximum funding award amount (whichever is less) can be paid
- Payment reimbursement is for paid costs:
 - **Paid:** Expenses for which the grantee has already made payment
 - Payment can only be issued to the grantee



We Want Your Input!

1. CEC staff are aware of one tool, SolarAPP+, that meets the specific purpose of this funding program and anticipate municipalities will primarily adopt SolarAPP+ as their automated, online permitting solution. Are there other solutions including custom IT development that should be supported by this funding program?
 - a. What is needed for your jurisdiction to make the decision to adopt SolarAPP+?
 - b. What is the likelihood that you would choose to implement a different solution than SolarAPP+?
2. What does the process to implement SolarAPP+ or another automated permit platform include?
 - a. Are there key decisions makers that must approve the use of a new system?
 - b. What is the timeframe for approval and adoption of a new system?
3. The SolarAPP+ tool integrates with existing municipal automated permit processing software or alternatively can be used as a stand-alone tool. Do you currently have an automated permit process?
 - a. If not, would you adopt SolarAPP+ as a stand-alone solution or seek to automate the permit process in addition to adopting the solar system permit validation provided by SolarAPP+.



We Want Your Input!

4. Application Process - Funding Levels: Please provide feedback on our proposed funding levels.

a. Are the proposed funding amounts for your jurisdiction sufficient to cover costs associated with adopting SolarAPP+ or launching an online, automated solar permitting software and training both staff and affected permit applicants?

5. Eligible Costs

a. Are the eligible costs proposed inclusive of all costs related to adopting an automated permitting system and training staff and affected parties in the use of the system?

b. Are there other costs associated with automated solar permitting software that we did not propose as eligible?



We Want Your Input!

6. Typically, Energy Commission grant programs only fund activities completed after a final grant agreement is approved, which for purposes of this program staff estimate to be no earlier than Fall 2022. Does this impact your plans to adopt an online automated solar permitting tool?
7. Reimbursement model – CEC staff are proposing that payment will be made on a reimbursement basis after all activities are completed. Does this funding model meet jurisdictions' needs sufficiently to encourage and support adoption of an online automated permit platform?
8. New homes permitting – Currently SolarAPP+ does not support permitting for new construction however NREL and its partners are working on this addition as well as permitting support for storage systems. Does this current limitation pose a barrier to adoption of the SolarAPP+ tool?



Public Comment

1. Public Comment

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- Over the telephone: dial *9 to “raise hand” and *6 to mute/unmute your phone line
- Type your question in the Q&A window
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2. Written comments are due by 5:00 p.m. on February 22, 2022

- Submit through the e-commenting system (21-SOLAR-01) at:
<https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Ecomment/Ecomment.aspx?docketnumber=21-SOLAR-01>





Next Steps

- February 2022: Public Comment until 5:00 PM on February 22, 2022
- E-comment:
<https://efiling.energy.ca.gov/Ecomment/Ecomment.aspx?docketnumber=21-SOLAR-01>
- March-May 2022: CEC reviews feedback and further develops program design and grant funding materials
- June 2022: Release notice of grant funding opportunity and begin accepting funding applications
- June 30, 2023: Statutory encumbrance deadline to reserve funding (application deadline will be ahead of this date)



Next Steps

- For more information, please visit our program webpage at <https://www.energy.ca.gov/calapp>
- Please join our CalAPP Program email list server, available from our webpage or at https://ww2.energy.ca.gov/listservers/index_cms.html
- CEC Contact: Geoffrey Dodson – geoffrey.dodson@energy.ca.gov
- NREL Contact: Jeff Cook – jeff.cook@nrel.gov



Thank You!

