

George Washington University Awarded Federal Funds to Boost Solar Energy Education

GW Solar Institute will lead development of cutting-edge training videos

WASHINGTON, DC - The George Washington University ([GW Solar Institute](#)) has just announced that it has received \$430,000 from the [U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative](#) as part of the [Solar Training and Education for Professionals \(STEP\)](#) funding program, which seeks to reduce solar installation costs by addressing gaps in solar training and energy education.

The funding will facilitate the creation of video-based education modules that will target professionals who are not directly involved with solar energy but play a crucial role in its financing, permitting, and development. The videos will provide STEP target audiences like real estate agents, code officials, and state regulators with the knowledge and skills they need to incorporate solar into everyday business and governmental practices. Educating these professionals about emerging solar issues and the role it plays in their daily work should help fast-track solar deployments across the country.

The GW Solar Institute will lead the two-year effort and be responsible for permanently storing resulting work products on its website and make it freely accessible to the public.

“Well-conceived videos can provide an extraordinary amount of educational information in a highly engaging and accessible manner,” said Amit Ronen, Director of the GW Solar Institute. **“By targeting specific information gaps, we believe this education initiative will play an important role in lowering solar costs and expanding U.S. deployment rates.”**

The GW Solar Institute will partner with the [National Renewable Energy Laboratory \(NREL\)](#) and [Planet Forward](#), both nationally recognized experts in solar education, for multimedia content development, and outreach to a variety of audiences.

NREL has the largest concentration of subject matter experts in solar energy in one location, which will allow the project team to cover breadth and depth when developing learning modules across multiple disciplines. NREL also has a wide-ranging archive of solar education and training related materials - much of which was created using Energy Department funding - which will be surveyed, catalogued, and repurposed for this project.

“The need for concise but quality solar education has evolved well beyond solar installers into the mainstream business community,” NREL’s Dr. Andy Walker said. **“This effort reaches out 360 degrees to cover financial, tax accounting, insurance, real estate, compliance, and the full spectrum of stakeholders. NREL is in a good position to support GW in this effort with a long record of practical project experience.”**

[Planet Forward](#), a project of the George Washington University School of Media and Public Affairs, uses web, video, social media, television, and events to lead conversations on our planet's future. Their team of experienced journalists, new media experts, student producers, editors, and reporters has unique insight and experience on how to harness new media platforms, messages, and content to engage a wide range of non-traditional audiences.

"Storytelling can have immense impact to communicate information, best practices and the excitement of innovation," said Frank Sesno, Planet Forward's founder and director of the GW School of Media and Public Affairs. **"Nowhere is this more apparent than in the story of solar, which is changing the energy landscape. I'm delighted that Planet Forward, the GW Solar Institute, and the Department of Energy are collaborating on this project."**

Today's information seekers expect materials that incorporate graphics and compelling footage and are sequenced to provide a lot of information within just a few minutes. These education modules will harness the latest interactive technologies and will take advantage of new insights into how students of all backgrounds most effectively learn and retain new ideas.

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The GW Solar Institute at the George Washington University (GW) identifies, creates, and shares pragmatic solutions to the public policy barriers preventing the adoption and scale of solar energy. Partnering with GW faculty and solar experts from around the world, the GW Solar Institute conducts research projects spanning a wide range of disciplines that include engineering, business, economics, law, and policy.

The GW Solar Institute provides objective, strategic, and accessible analysis on the many complex issues surrounding solar energy. The GW Solar Institute also works with a rising generation eager to contribute to a clean energy economy, providing educational opportunities and training to GW's diverse student body. Learn more at: solar.gwu.edu.

The [U.S. Department of Energy SunShot Initiative](#) is a collaborative national effort that aggressively drives innovation to make solar energy fully cost-competitive with traditional energy sources before the end of the decade. Through SunShot, the Energy Department supports efforts by private companies, universities, and national laboratories to drive down the cost of solar electricity to \$0.06 per kilowatt-hour. Learn more at energy.gov/sunshot.