

Celebrating 20 Years of State Leadership



Investing in Relationships: Six Community Engagement Models from Energy Trust of Oregon

June 8, 2023

Webinar Logistics



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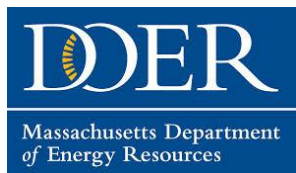
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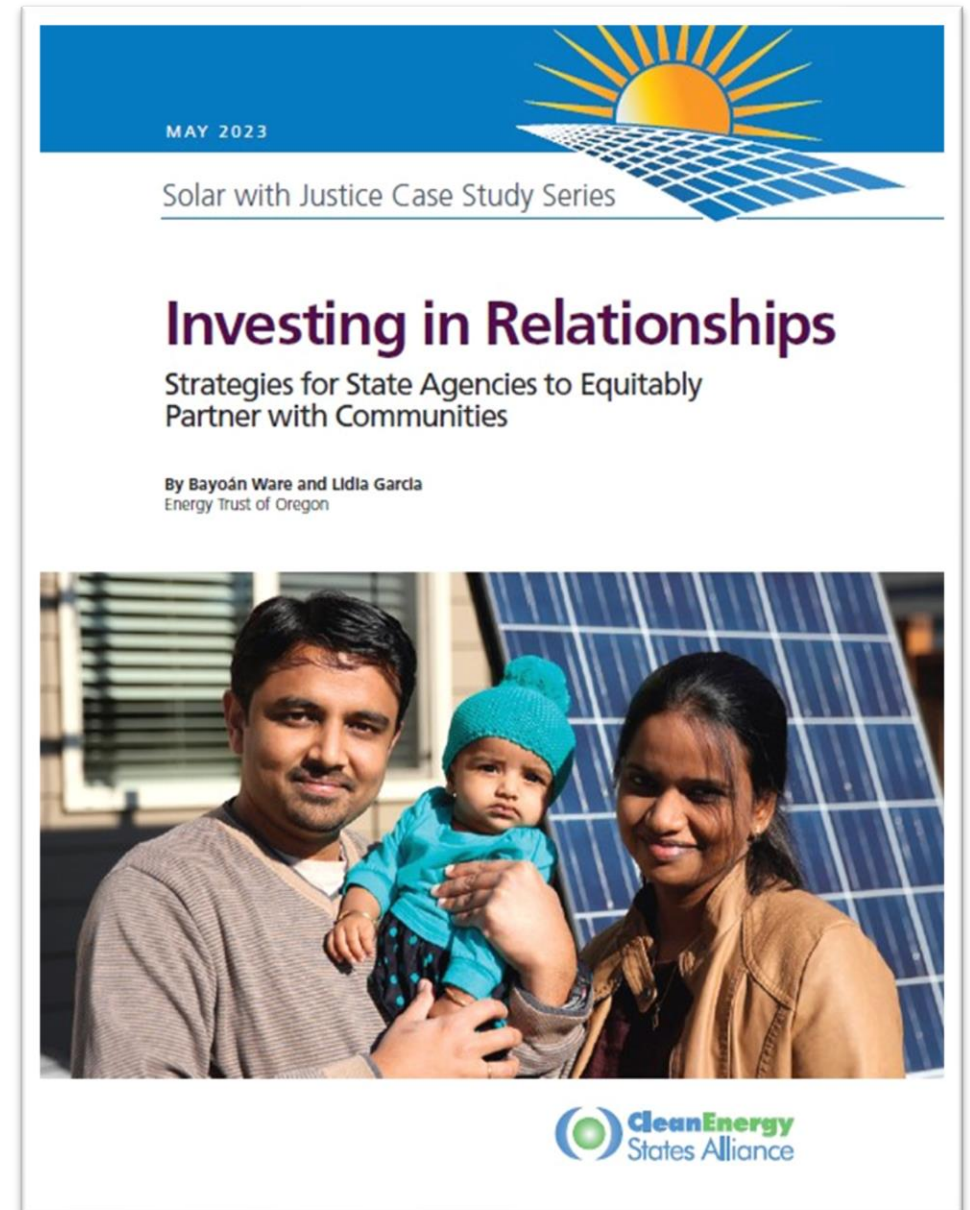


Investing in Relationships: Strategies State Agencies Can Use to Equitably Partner with Community Representatives

May 2023

By Bayoán Ware and Lidia Garcia, Energy Trust of Oregon, for the Clean Energy States Alliance

www.cesa.org/resource-library/resource/community-engagement-models-energy-trust-oregon





Solar with Justice

- This webinar and the accompanying case study are products of CESA's **Solar with Justice: Connecting States and Communities** project, which aims to identify models for how state energy agencies and community-based organizations can collaborate more effectively to expand access to solar.
- The project is supported through an award from the US Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office. The Nathan Cummings Foundation has also provided funding support.
- Visit www.cesa.org/projects/solar-with-justice/ to learn more.



Webinar Speakers



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Thank you for attending our webinar

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Learn more about CESA's **Solar with Justice: Connecting States and Communities** project
at www.cesa.org/projects/solar-with-justice

Upcoming Webinar

Resilient Power for Florida Community Health Centers

Thursday, July 13, 1-2:30pm ET

This webinar will feature speakers from Clean Energy Group, Florida Association of Community Health Centers, Direct Relief, and American Microgrid Solutions for a discussion on backup power needs and opportunities at Florida's Community Health Centers.

Read more and register: www.cesa.org/webinars



Investing in Relationships

Strategies for Equitable Community Partnerships

Lidia Garcia & Bayo Ware

Agenda

- Welcome + acknowledgements
- About Energy Trust
- Community engagement approach
- Engagement strategy highlights
- Lessons learned

Acknowledgements

- Energy Trust of Oregon
 - Emma Clark
 - Ryan Crews
 - Sue Fletcher
 - Wendy Gibson
 - Tyrone Henry
 - Debbie Menashe
 - Lizzie Rubado
 - Hannah Cruz
 - Betsy Kauffman
 - Abby Spegman
- Dragonfly Consulting
 - Shelley Beaulieu
- Empress Rules Equity Consulting
 - Kheoshi Owens
- Clean Energy States Alliance
 - Warren Leon
 - Abbe Ramanan

About Energy Trust and community engagement strategy

About us

Independent
nonprofit

Serving 2.4 million customers of
Portland General Electric,
Pacific Power, NW Natural,
Cascade Natural Gas and Avista

Providing
access to
affordable
energy

Generating
homegrown,
renewable
power

Building a
stronger Oregon
and SW
Washington

Background

- Historical focus on cost-effective savings and generation methods led to underserving many eligible customer groups
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiative introduced to create new approaches that better serve these customers
 - DEI Committee and living DEI Plan guide our strategy
 - Greater collaboration needed with the communities we're working to serve





Community partnerships have never been more essential for achieving goals

Community Engagement Best Practices

- Engaging with **community representatives** to achieve shared goals
 - Small businesses
 - Community-based organizations
 - Local leaders
- Compensating community representatives ensures equity and fosters collaboration
- Relationships move beyond transactional
 - Truly effective projects involve cocreation with the community in the earliest stages to achieve mutual benefit



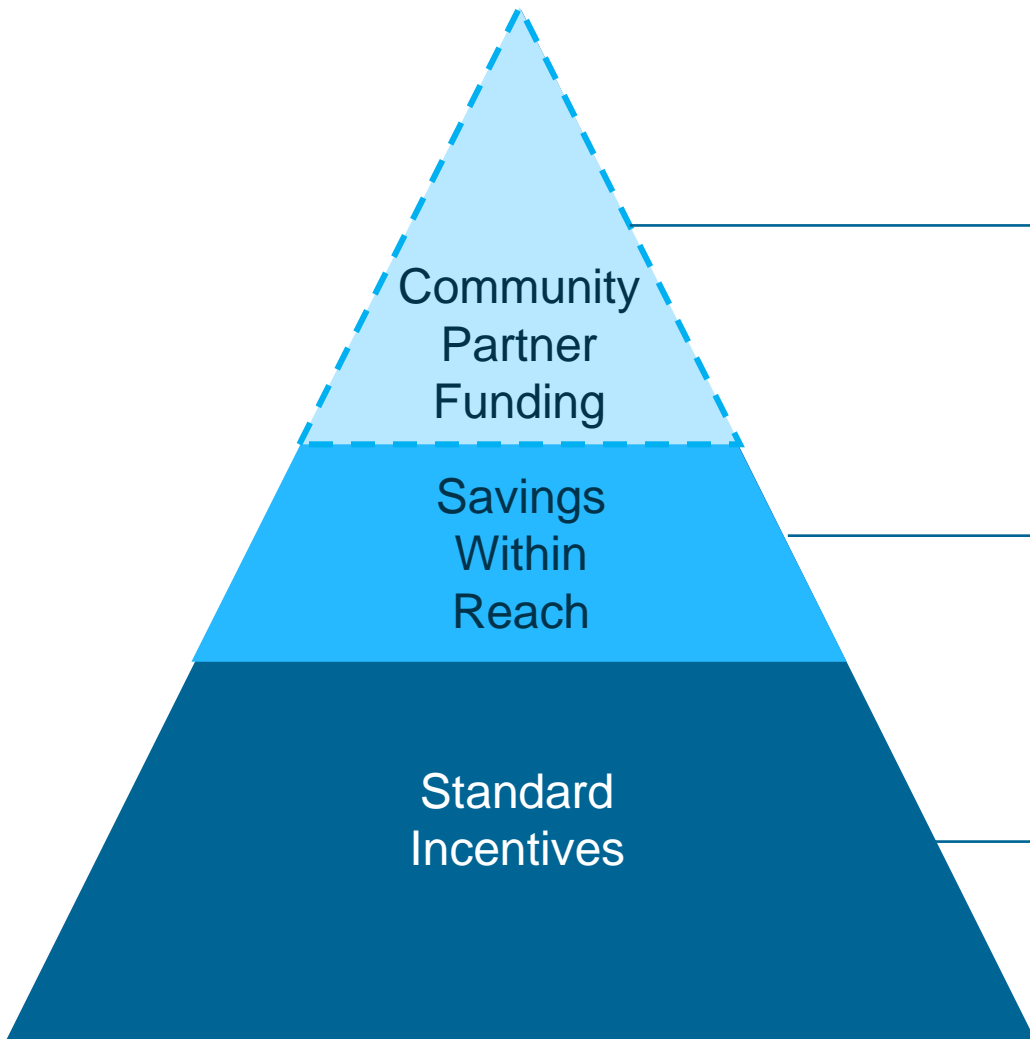
Community-led Approaches to Expand Impact

Diversity Advisory Council (DAC)

- External stakeholder group representing communities Energy Trust has underserved
 - Members receive stipends for participation
- Supports Energy Trust's DEI goals through:
 - Providing input and feedback
 - Identifying learning topics for board and leadership
 - Providing community insights and connections
- Formation process guided by Foundational DAC and dedicated Energy Trust staff



Community Partner Funding



Community Partner Funding offers higher incentives delivered by qualifying community-based organizations, community action agencies, housing authorities, economic development districts, etc.

Set of increased incentives for low-to-moderate income customers delivered by trade ally contractors.

Standard incentive amounts available to all customers.

Community Partner Funding

- Incentives alone is not enough-- partner organizations gain capacity through training, administrative support, marketing assistance, relationship development and other support from Energy Trust
- Relationships require both flexibility and structure
- Be patient and measure success in new ways

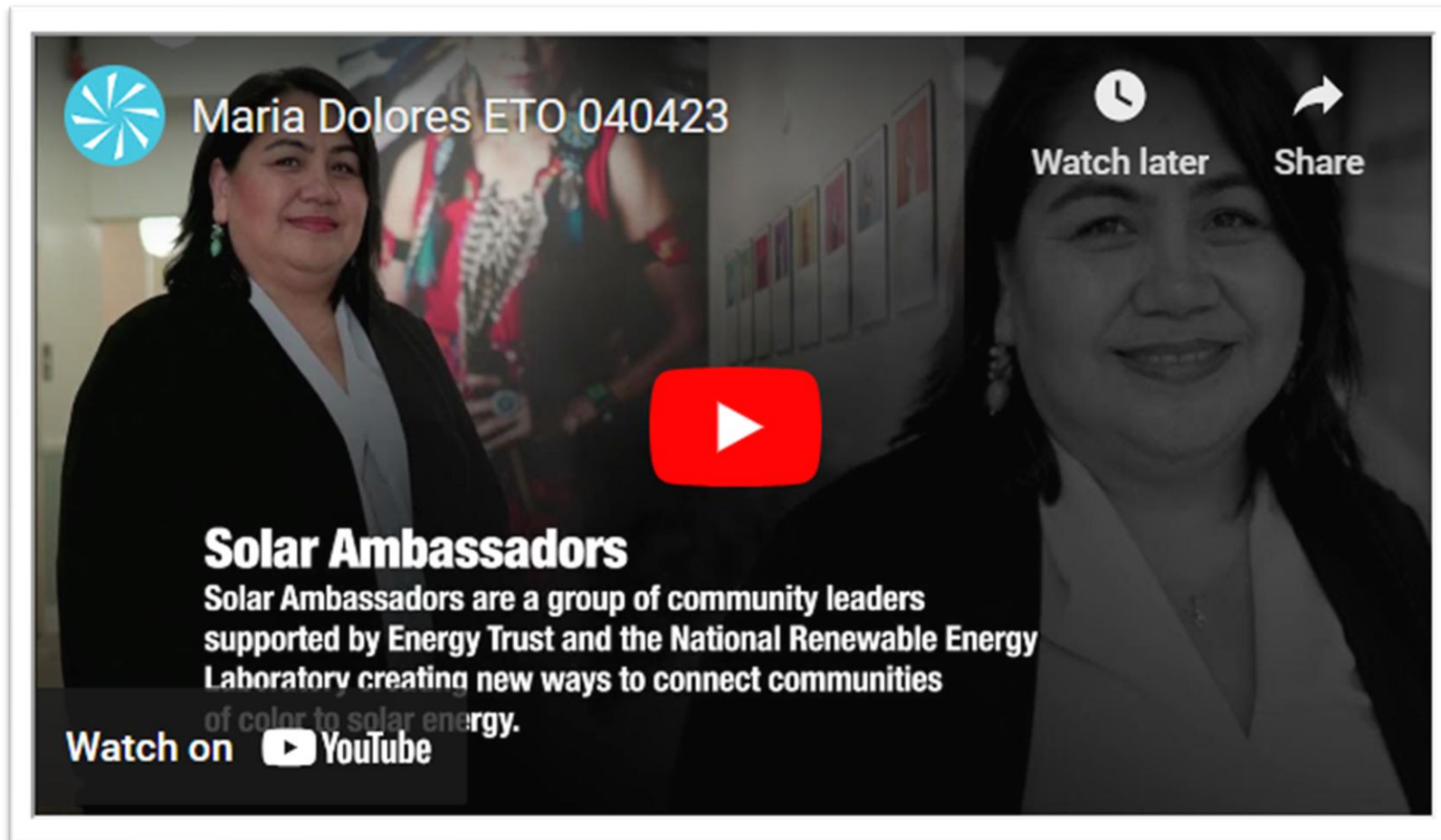


Solar Ambassadors

- Pilot aimed at increasing access and awareness of residential solar electrical systems among homeowners of color in the Portland Metro Area
- Collaborating with seven community-based organizations to learn strategies to make solar more accessible
- Recruit and train community members to serve as ambassadors.



VIDEO LINK: <https://blog.energytrust.org/solar-ambassadors-to-make-solar-more-accessible-for-communities-of-color/>





DEI Community Engagement Sessions

- Current Diversity, Equity and Inclusion plan includes five goals
- In 2022, hosted a series of listening sessions with community members to get feedback on proposed metrics
- Sessions were intentionally designed to remove participation barriers
 - Hosted at accessible locations and convenient times with meals provided
 - Prioritized time for community voices

Five steps toward community partnerships

Lessons Learned

- Identify the problem
 - Include community representatives in initial stages
 - Compensate for expertise
- Conduct preliminary research
 - Seek initial guidance from state agencies, learn about existing solutions
 - Community representatives can advise how recommendations apply to local contexts.
- Brainstorm small solutions
 - Co-create small solutions that can be effectively managed and adjusted
 - Create a foundation of success and trust





Lessons Learned

- Conduct a pilot
 - Collaborate with community representatives to carry out solutions
 - Provide resources and help build capacity
 - Opportunity to strengthen relationships and learn about challenges and solutions
- Assess and iterate
 - Pause periodically to assess the project and use learnings to determine where resources are most needed to move to the next phase



Thank you

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