

Tool #4:

Model Ordinances

What is it?

Model solar ordinances provide regions with a framework to facilitate the protection and promotion of solar energy resources in various municipalities.

Model solar ordinances can contain helpful implementation strategies, including but not limited to:

- laying out siting requirements for solar;
- outlining safety requirements for solar installations; and
- establishing provisions to maximize solar access.

How do you do it?

- Survey your local governments to better understand their solar ordinance needs.
- Form a subcommittee or assign staff tasked with this project.
- Review model ordinances completed by other regional councils (see *Who else is doing it?* box below).
- Develop a model ordinance and make it specific to your region. Many model ordinances can be easily adapted to fit your regional requirements. Add guidance about how local communities can customize the model ordinance to fit their needs.
- Issue a public review and have the model ordinance reviewed by an attorney and your regional Board, if necessary.
- Edit and finalize the model ordinance.
- Market and disseminate information online, and through workshops and/or webinars.

Who else is doing it?

- The Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) developed a model solar energy systems ordinance which includes multiple ways to regulate an aspect of a solar energy system, regulate the installation and operation of solar and thermal energy facilities, and can be adopted as a whole or in sections. For more information see the TCRPC profile on page 18 of this *Guide* or visit <http://www.tcrpc-pa.org/assets/adeptiv/upload/attach/Solar%20Energy%20Systems.pdf>.
- The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) has developed a series of model Alternative Energy Ordinance Frameworks, which provide resources on citing, permitting and funding alternative energy systems for solar, geothermal and wind. For more information, see the DVRPC case study on page 32 of this *Guide* or visit www.dvrpc.org/energyclimate/.

Where can I get more information?

- The American Planning Association has a Solar Energy Essential Info Packet and Inquiry Answer Service are both great resources to learn more about updating codes and ordinances. <http://www.planning.org/research/solar/>
- The Columbia Law School's Center for Climate Change Law has prepared a model small-scale solar ordinance. https://www.law.columbia.edu/null/download?&exclusive=filemgr.download&file_id=59609
- The APA compiled examples of solar access ordinances nationwide. <http://www.planning.org/pas/infopackets/open/pdf/30part3.pdf>
- The County of Santa Clara, California compiled examples of zoning ordinance standards for solar electric generating facilities. <http://www.sccgov.org/sites/planning/PlansPrograms/Solar/Documents/solar-power-and-land-use-in-SCC-final-for-Website.pdf>
- Massachusetts' Department of Energy Resources provides guidance for providing as-of-right siting in designated locations for renewable/alternative energy generation, research and development, or manufacturing facilities. <http://www.mass.gov/eea/energy-utilities-clean-tech/green-communities/gc-grant-program/criterion-1.html>