

# Tool #5:

## Training and Certification

### What is it?

Installer certification indicates that your region is keeping pace with national standards developed by a large base of stakeholders. Certification can result in safer and higher performance installations as certified installers typically demonstrate a higher level of competency and a commitment to excellence than non-certified installers. Using nationally recognized programs relieves municipalities of the need to create their own certification standards.

A trained code official promotes safe solar installations and can expedite the inspection process saving money. An uneducated code official could potentially approve an improperly installed solar system, putting the safety of the building occupants, system owners, the public and others at risk.

### How do you do it?

- Coordinate with an organization providing solar training and education. These organizations can include local universities, colleges and training institutions. See below for some national examples.
- Collaborate with your region's solar industry representatives to identify what is needed to develop a safe installation process.
- Set up a training course for code officials or installers to collaborate with communities within your region.
- Work with state code and standards to determine whether continuing education credit can be offered for training. Offering credits provides an extra incentive to attend training.
- Educate the community about the value of using certified installers.
- Consider sharing a solar permitting and inspection department within the region.

### Who else is doing it?

- The Pima Association of Governments (PAG) hosts the Southern Arizona Solar Standards Board, which is designed to encourage quality solar installations in the region by providing a list of accredited solar installers, promoting best practices and educating the general public about solar installations. For more information see the PAG case study on page 26 of this *Guide* or visit <http://www.solarstandards.org/>.
- Dubuque is the first city in Iowa to implement a city-wide solar thermal installation ordinance, mandating that all installers must be either NABCEP (National American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners) certified or have successfully completed and passed the Solar Thermal Installation course and performed two installations. For more information, visit <http://www.ecia.org/pdf/publications/ECIA-E-Newsletter1-12.pdf>.

### Where can I get more information?

- The North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners offers a national certification program for solar installers. <http://www.nabcep.org/>
- The Solar Instructor Training Network supports high-quality training through offering expert instruction and top training facilities within select educational institutions in their regions. [http://www1.eere.energy.gov/solar/sunshot/instructor\\_training\\_network.html](http://www1.eere.energy.gov/solar/sunshot/instructor_training_network.html)
- Electronics Technicians Association provides training and certification for alternative energy installers. <http://www.eta-i.org>
- The Interstate Renewable Energy Council's Best Practices & Recommended Guidelines for Renewable Energy Training document provides resources to assist in solar training. <http://irecusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/10/BestPracticesFormatted2010Final2410.pdf>
- The U.S. Department of Energy's *Solar Powering Your Community: A Guide for Local Governments* is a comprehensive resource created to assist local governments and stakeholders in designing and implementing a strategic local solar plan. The guidebook includes a section on code official training and installer licensing and certification on page 72-79. [http://www4.eere.energy.gov/solar/sunshot/resource\\_center/sites/default/files/solar-powering-your-community-guide-for-local-governments.pdf](http://www4.eere.energy.gov/solar/sunshot/resource_center/sites/default/files/solar-powering-your-community-guide-for-local-governments.pdf)