



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY



Preface

The American-Made Solar Prize Round 8 is designed to accelerate and sustain American solar innovation through a series of contests, leveraging a diverse and powerful support network of national laboratories, energy incubators, and other resources across the United States.

The U.S. Department of Energy's Solar Prize will be governed by 15 U.S.C. §3719 and this Official Rules document. This is not a procurement under the Federal Acquisitions Regulations and will not result in a grant or cooperative agreement under 2 CFR 200. The Prize Administrator reserves the right to modify this Official Rules document if necessary and will publicly post any such notifications as well as notify registered prize participants.

Note: These rules are different from the rules for previous Solar Prize rounds. Please read these rules to ensure you have the most up-to-date information and are applying to the correct program.

Contents

- Preface 2
- Contents 3
- 1 Program Summary 5**
 - 1.1 Introduction 5
 - 1.2 Background..... 6
 - 1.3 Contests..... 7
 - 1.4 Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Contest 9
 - 1.5 Power Up Contest..... 10
 - Power Up Program 12
 - Power Up Pitch Competition - What To Submit and Evaluation Criteria..... 14
 - Power Up Pitch Competition Scoring..... 15
 - 1.6 American-Made Network and Awards for Connectors 16
 - 1.7 Important Dates 18
 - 1.8 Eligibility Requirements 18
 - 1.9 Alignment With Program Goals 22
 - 1.10 Find Help 22
 - 1.11 Additional Requirements..... 22
- 2 Ready! Contest Rules 23**
 - 2.1 Introduction 23
 - 2.2 Goal..... 23
 - 2.3 Prizes To Win 23
 - 2.4 How To Enter 23
 - 2.5 Ready! Contest Process 23
 - 2.6 What To Submit and Evaluation Criteria..... 24
 - 2.7 Scoring Process..... 30
 - 2.8 Power Up Contest..... 31
 - 2.9 Find Help..... 32
 - 2.10 Additional Requirements..... 32
- 3 Set! Contest Rules..... 33**
 - 3.1 Introduction 33
 - 3.2 Goal..... 33
 - 3.3 Prizes To Win 33
 - 3.4 How To Enter 33
 - 3.5 Set! Contest Process..... 33
 - 3.6 What To Submit and Evaluation Criteria..... 34
 - 3.7 Scoring Process..... 42
 - 3.8 Find Help..... 42
 - 3.9 Additional Requirements 42
- 4 Go! Contest Rules 43**
 - 4.1 Introduction 43
 - 4.2 Goal..... 43
 - 4.3 Prizes To Win 43
 - 4.4 How To Enter 44
 - 4.5 Go! Contest Process..... 44
 - 4.6 What To Submit and Evaluation Criteria..... 44
 - 4.7 Scoring Process..... 52
 - 4.8 Find Help..... 53



4.9 Additional Requirements	53
Appendix 1: Additional Terms and Conditions.....	54
A.1 Universal Contest Requirements	54
A.2 Voucher Pairing System	54
A.3 Verification for Payments.....	55
A.4 Teams and Single-Entity Awards	55
A.5 Submission Rights.....	55
A.6 Copyright	56
A.7 Contest Subject to Applicable Law	56
A.8 Resolution of Disputes.....	57
A.9 Publicity.....	57
A.10 Liability.....	57
A.11 Records of Retention and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).....	57
A.12 Privacy.....	58
A.13 General Conditions	58
A.14 Program Policy Factors	59
A.15 National Environmental Policy Act Compliance	59
A.16 Definitions	60
A.17 Return of Funds.....	60



1 Program Summary

1.1 Introduction

The American-Made Solar Prize is a multimillion-dollar prize competition designed to energize U.S. solar innovation. The prize consists of a series of contests that accelerate the entrepreneurial process from years to months. Spearheaded by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO), and in partnership with the [National Renewable Energy Laboratory](#) (NREL), the Solar Prize utilizes a program structure designed to strengthen and scale critical connections that accelerate and sustain American innovation. The program achieves this through two intertwined components: a prize competition and the American-Made Network.

Competitors leverage the American-Made Network, an innovation engine of more than 475 organizations that includes world-class experts at DOE's 17 national laboratories as well as clean tech accelerators, incubators, universities, facilities, and more.

Round 8 of the Solar Prize offers more than \$4.2 million in cash and voucher prizes for innovations in hardware and software that will increase the competitiveness of the U.S. solar industry. Each competitor can win up to \$650,000 in cash and \$90,000 in technical assistance vouchers.

Building a clean energy economy and addressing the climate crisis is a top priority of the Biden administration. This prize will advance the Biden administration's goals to achieve carbon-pollution-free electricity by 2035, "deliver an equitable, clean energy future, and put the United States on a path to achieve net-zero emissions, economywide, by no later than 2050"¹ to the benefit of all Americans. DOE is committed to pushing the frontiers of science and engineering; catalyzing clean energy jobs through research, development, demonstration, and deployment; and ensuring environmental justice and the inclusion of disadvantaged communities.

The activities incentivized by this prize support the governmentwide approach to the climate crisis by driving innovation that can lead to the deployment of clean energy technologies, which are critical for climate protection. Specifically, [SETO](#) is launching Round 8 of the American-Made Solar Prize, a part of the American-Made Challenges, to energize U.S. solar competitiveness and innovation. This program consists of two parallel and integrated features: the Ready!, Set!, and Go! Contests, and the American-Made Network.

Competitors in the Ready!, Set!, and Go! Contests participate in escalating challenges. These challenges incentivize driving innovations from idea to pilot testing on an accelerated schedule—in less than 1 year. Through the first seven rounds of the Solar Prize, 160 teams have won \$22.6 million in cash, \$6.4 million in technical support vouchers, \$700,000 in bonus Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Contest cash prizes, and \$100,000 in Power Up Contest cash prizes. More information about previous winners can be found through [the American-Made Challenges website](#). The American-Made Network supports competitors' efforts by connecting them with DOE's national laboratories, including their world-class research facilities and experts, as well as private-sector stakeholders who are already actively assisting entrepreneurs to bring innovative ideas and concepts to market. This community includes incubators, investors, philanthropists, fabrication facilities, and seasoned industry leaders, all of whom will provide technical insight, business development expertise, product validation, and other support throughout the

¹ Executive Order 14008, "Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad" (Jan. 27, 2021).



competition. These diverse entities are called “Connectors” and make up the key components of the Network.

Currently, the solar industry and its associated research community do not match the diversity of the United States. Women and minorities are underrepresented in the solar industry and in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. STEM fields also lack geographical diversity, with U.S. rural areas underrepresented relative to large population centers. Because STEM students and graduates support research and development activities, which can result in the formation of startup companies, the lack of diversity in that pipeline affects diversity in STEM startups. To achieve the administration’s energy justice goals, SETO is striving to ensure that the work it funds supports more equitable participation in the solar energy community. SETO recognizes the inherent and proven advantages of diverse teams and encourages competitors to consider diversity and inclusion when developing their teams.

These three contests and the American-Made Network bring connections, resources, and funding to competitors as they advance their innovations, accelerating their cycles of learning from years to months. The program energizes innovation in U.S. solar technology and reasserts the country’s global leadership in next-generation technologies.

1.2 Background

New energy technologies have begun to reshape the national and global energy landscape. Advanced electrification, digitization, and deployment of grid-connected distributed energy assets are changing the energy industry. The United States has been at the forefront of this transformation, and as technologies, markets, services, and capital providers have evolved over the past decade, there is a reinvigorated entrepreneurial interest across all facets of the nation’s energy system.

However, domestic manufacturing of solar technologies has continued to decline, impeding innovations that have been created in America from being produced in America. This decline has made it challenging to fully harness the jobs and economic benefits created by these innovations while also weakening domestic supply chain infrastructure, competitiveness, and national security. U.S.-led energy research and development efforts continue to identify and lay the groundwork for exploring many of the most advanced energy technologies in the world. New and existing efforts that create and support advanced manufacturing solutions must now come together, reestablishing U.S. manufacturing leadership to drive down costs and ensure that the nation leads the world in energy production and innovation.

Looking beyond domestic manufacturing opportunities, software and business model innovations can also expand and increase the competitiveness of the domestic solar industry. Some of the biggest cost drivers of installed solar are costs associated with the non-hardware aspects of solar deployment, including regulatory compliance, customer acquisition, financing, operations and maintenance, and grid integration. Advanced communications, computation, and information technology bring new tool sets to rethink how today’s solar energy problems are solved. Software and business model innovations developed by new and diverse entrepreneurs can streamline and accelerate solar industry growth, create significant domestic value by expanding solar markets and creating high-quality jobs, and accelerate the growth of new markets. They can specifically help expand solar access to underserved communities, which can benefit greatly from lower energy costs, economic development, and decarbonization. Looking forward, continued advances in load disaggregation and control, and the proliferation of energy storage technology, bring new opportunities to amplify the impact of distributed solar generation by increasing resiliency and adding value for communities. The American-Made Solar Prize is designed to meet these challenges and spur innovations that address difficulties facing the solar energy sector.



The program makes it faster and easier for our nation to transform innovative research and ideas into early-stage concepts and then build prototypes that are ready for validation. As competitors work to win cash prizes and other benefits, they will connect with mentoring, training, and other services from the American-Made Network, resulting in the long-term success of participants and U.S. manufacturing.

The Solar Prize encourages competitors to incorporate JEDI principles into their team’s vision, mission, policies, and processes. This could include leadership team composition, hiring practices, or tangible evidence of related organizational values. The geographic locations where competitors innovate and build companies are also an important consideration. Competitors who are located in or are building a presence in opportunity zones—economically distressed communities defined by census tract—are encouraged to apply.

1.3 Contests

The Ready!, Set!, and Go! Contests fast-track efforts to identify, develop, and test disruptive solutions to meet solar industry needs. Each stage includes a contest period during which participants work to rapidly advance their solutions. Participants may also opt to compete in the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Contest (see [Section 1.4](#)) in each round. The Power Up Contest (see [Section 1.5](#)) will support new and diverse innovators in the American-Made Solar Prize. Additional bonus prizes may be available and will be announced by the Prize Administrator, via an update to the Official Rules document, prior to the Ready! Contest deadline. DOE invites anyone, individually or as a team, to compete to transform a conceptual solution into an impactful product and business. This prize seeks hardware and software solutions.

The Contests:

1. **Ready! Contest** – Competitors demonstrate that they have identified and taken action toward developing an impactful idea or solution that addresses a critical need in the solar industry. They also propose a path to develop a proof of concept. Winners receive \$50,000 in cash and are eligible to compete in the Set! Contest. Any eligible person, team, or business can submit a package to compete in the Ready! Contest, although individuals must form a business if they advance to the Set! Contest. A panel of expert reviewers from industry, national laboratories, and government evaluates submissions based on the criteria in [Section 2.6](#). DOE selects the Ready! Contest winners, referred to as Solar Prize semifinalists, based on reviewer input and the impact that the new solutions may have on the solar industry. The semifinalists are then eligible to compete in the Set! Contest.
2. **Set! Contest** – Semifinalists work to substantially advance their technology solution toward a viable and promising proof of concept. They must show that their proof of concept solves an important problem in the solar industry and that it will have significant demand when it enters the market. Competitors are expected to make significant progress toward developing a pathway to validate and pilot test their solution. The criteria for evaluation of the Set! Contest can be found in [Section 3.6](#). The semifinalists are evaluated by a panel of reviewers during Set! Interview Day. The selected Set! Contest winners, referred to as Solar Prize finalists, receive \$100,000 in cash. They are then eligible to compete in the Go! Contest.
3. **Go! Contest** – Finalists work to substantially advance their solutions from proof of concept to a refined prototype/product. Finalists must find a committed partnership that demonstrates the commercial viability of their innovation. They are evaluated by a panel of reviewers during a national Demonstration Day event, and DOE selects two winners. Each winner receives \$500,000



in cash. All Set! finalists who are eligible and submit to the Go! Contest will win \$90,000 in vouchers that are redeemable at national laboratories and qualified fabrication facilities.

4. **JEDI Contest** – In the Ready!, Set!, and Go! Contests, competitors have the option to also compete in the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Contest, which provides up to \$200,000 in additional cash prizes distributed among JEDI Contest winners. JEDI Contest competitors show how their solution addresses solar market barriers to adoption and deployment in underserved communities and work to substantially advance their approach toward JEDI goals as they progress through the competition.
5. **Power Up Contest** – This contest is designed to support and advance new and diverse teams that have compelling applications but are not selected as Ready! Contest winners. The Ready! Contest submission package is used for evaluation in the Power Up Contest. Up to 10 teams may be selected to split a prize pool of \$100,000 and be enrolled in a program hosted by Power Connectors² to receive tailored business support. This support will help them refine their technology development road map, improve their business plan, and validate their product/market fit. At the end of the program, the teams will participate in a virtual private Pitch Competition, and the winner will receive a small prize and passes to the national event for the Round 8 Go! Contest.

The five contests offer more than \$3.3 million in cash prizes and \$900,000 in vouchers.

Contest Funding:

Contest	Winners	Prize
1. Ready!	Up to 20	\$50,000 in cash
2. Set!	Up to 10	\$100,000 in cash
3. Go!	2	\$500,000 in cash
	Up to 10	\$90,000 in vouchers to all Set! finalists who submit to the Go! Contest, awarded at the Go! announcement
4. JEDI	Up to 17	\$200,000 in cash total, per description in Section 1.4
5. Power Up	Up to 10	\$100,000 in cash total, per description in Section 1.5
	1	\$4,000 in cash total and two complimentary passes to an industry conference for winner of the Pitch Competition, per description in Section 1.5

To learn more and sign up, go to <http://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8>.

² See [Section 1.6](#) for the definition of Power Connector.



1.4 Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Contest

The JEDI Contest encourages Solar Prize competitors to consider and incorporate JEDI principles into their innovations.

There are numerous barriers to accelerating the growth of solar in underserved communities in the United States,³ including some that can be overcome with software and business model innovations to help facilitate access to financing, allocate the benefits of shared assets, improve customer outreach and engagement, and streamline the development of relevant solar projects. Application-specific hardware designed for low-cost, straightforward adoption in underserved communities also has a role to play. Solar deployment in underserved communities can bring direct cost savings, public health benefits, job opportunities, and resilience when paired with energy storage technologies. Solar innovations and local capacity building are among the factors critical to ensuring that underserved communities have access to clean energy.

JEDI Contest competitors must show how their solution addresses solar market barriers to adoption and deployment in underserved communities and work to substantially advance their approach toward JEDI goals as they progress through the competition. JEDI Contest competitors must also demonstrate (1) their understanding of the unique needs of the communities they plan to engage, (2) their credibility with the communities, such as via a shared background or previous experience working with underserved or disadvantaged communities, and (3) their commitment to long-term support of these communities.

The JEDI Contest is focused on four key areas:

- **Opportunity Space:** Competitors rigorously assess the needs of underserved communities and uncover key insights from potential customers or end users of the product.
- **Solution Development:** Competitors design and develop a solution to overcome identified barriers.
- **Market Impact:** Competitors measure progress and validate assumptions with potential customers, users, or market experts during development and testing to demonstrate the solution's impact and need in underserved communities.
- **Network Activation:** Competitors advance the proposed solution by cultivating a diverse network of mentors and partners, which can include members of the American-Made Network, funders, and other relevant entities.

Note: Although the JEDI Contest is focused on solutions benefiting underserved communities, team diversity and inclusion is important to the Solar Prize and is part of the “Team” evaluation criteria at each stage. All Solar Prize competitors are encouraged to incorporate diversity and inclusion principles into their organization’s vision, mission, policies, and processes, regardless of participation in the JEDI Contest.

³ <https://www.nrel.gov/state-local-tribal/lmi-solar.html>



In the Ready!, Set!, and Go! Contests, competitors have the option to also compete in the JEDI Contest, which provides up to \$200,000 in additional cash prizes distributed among JEDI Contest winners, per the table below.

	JEDI Contest Winners	Prize Pool
1. Ready!	Up to 10 Solar Prize semifinalists	\$100,000 split equally among JEDI Contest winners, with individual prizes capped at \$25,000
2. Set!	Up to 5 Solar Prize finalists	\$50,000 split among JEDI Contest winners
3. Go!	Up to 2 Go! competitors	\$50,000 split among JEDI Contest winners

Up to 10 semifinalists (i.e., Ready! winners), up to five finalists (i.e., Set! winners), and up to two Go! competitors may win the JEDI Contest. The \$100,000 cash prize pool for Ready! and the \$50,000 cash prize pool for Set! and Go! are distributed evenly among JEDI Contest winner(s) during each contest. For the Ready! Contest, the individual prizes are capped at \$25,000.

In the Ready! Contest, anyone can compete in the JEDI Contest, but only Ready! winners (i.e., Solar Prize semifinalists) can win the JEDI Contest at the Ready! stage. In the Set! Contest, JEDI Contest winners are selected from the pool of Set! winners (i.e., Solar Prize finalists). In the Go! Contest, the JEDI Contest winners are selected from the pool of Set! winners competing in the Go! Contest, including the Go! Contest winners. Stated another way, a Set! winner may win the JEDI Contest at the Go! stage, even if they don't win the Go! Contest.

JEDI Contest winners are chosen by a panel of reviewers, including JEDI subject-matter experts. Competing in the JEDI Contest does not impact selections in the other Solar Prize contests and is completely optional. DOE reserves the right to not award JEDI Contest winners if none of the submissions adequately address the needs of underserved communities.

Because the JEDI Contest runs in parallel with the Ready!, Set!, and Go! Contests, it follows the processes described in the subsequent sections (Sections [2.5](#), [3.5](#), and [4.5](#)). Competitors who wish to compete in the JEDI Contest must indicate their interest in their submission package, describe how their solution enables underserved communities to overcome systemic solar barriers and share in the benefits of solar deployment, and detail their efforts to substantially advance their approach should they move through the Ready!, Set!, and Go! Contests. If a Solar Prize semifinalist does not win the JEDI Contest at the Ready! stage, they are still eligible to submit a JEDI solution in the Set! Contest. The same applies for finalists who did not win the JEDI Contest at the Set! stage—competitors can try again in the Go! Contest.

To learn more and sign up, go to <http://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8>.

1.5 Power Up Contest

Introduced in Round 7 of the Solar Prize, the Power Up Contest is designed to support and advance new and diverse teams that have compelling applications but are not selected as semifinalists in the Ready! Contest. Up to 10 teams may be selected to win up to \$10,000 in cash each, as well as receive tailored



business development support from an American-Made Network Power Connector⁴ based on the application the team submits to the Ready! Contest. This support will help them refine their technology development road map, improve their business plan, and validate their product/market fit.

The American-Made Solar Prize is the longest-running American-Made Challenge, and its competitiveness has increased over time. DOE wants to ensure that it supports new and diverse solar innovators and accelerates their progress into the entrepreneurial innovation ecosystem. Furthermore, DOE is pursuing efforts to enable an inclusive and just entrepreneurial innovation ecosystem⁵ in climate and energy technologies. As part of the Biden administration's Justice 40 Initiative, which has a goal of delivering 40% of the overall benefits of relevant federal investments in climate and energy to disadvantaged communities⁶, it is important to ensure that these communities can participate in various DOE funding mechanisms. Improvements are needed to make the clean energy innovation ecosystem more inclusive and accessible to individuals from groups historically underrepresented in STEM and from disadvantaged communities.

Winners of the Power Up Contest will be teams whose innovations are not selected for the Ready! Contest, but whose innovations have technological or commercialization potential. Submissions will be evaluated under the same criteria as the Ready! Contest, plus one additional criterion. These teams will represent individuals with diverse expertise, perspectives, and experiences.

Competitors interested in the Power Up Contest must opt in to the contest on the HeroX submission form by answering the following question:

The Power Up Contest offers a program for tailored business support and up to \$10,000 to 10 competitors who are not selected for Ready! but demonstrate a solution and team with potential. Would your team like to be considered for the Power Up Program if selected as a Power Up Awardee? If yes, please summarize in no more than 100 words what the benefit of the program would be for your team. Please note that opting in to the Power Up Contest will not take you out of consideration for winning a Ready! award.

For the full evaluation criteria considered for Power Up awardees, see [Section 2.8](#).

Power Up Awardees will win \$3,000 and then be enrolled in a program to receive tailored support from Power Connectors over a multi-week course, the Power Up Program. The Power Up Awardees have the chance to win an additional \$7,000 after completing the course and meeting its requirements.

The Power Up Program will be followed by a virtual private Pitch Competition. The Pitch Competition will give the teams an opportunity to demonstrate what they've learned in the Power Up Program and showcase to the selection official how they've grown. The Power Up Program will include dedicated mentorship around giving pitches and tailoring a pitch to a specific audience, as well as slide deck review, practice sessions, and more, to prepare teams for the competition. The selection official will attend the competition and review the pitches with a panel of external experts and will select one winner of the Pitch

⁴ See [Section 1.6](#) for the definition of Power Connector.

⁵ The "innovation ecosystem" is the evolving set of actors, activities, and artifacts, and the institutions and relations (including complementary and substitute relations), that are important for the innovative performance of an actor or a population of actors. (Grandstrand, O. and M. Holgersson. 2020. "[Innovation Ecosystems: A Conceptual Review and a New Definition](#)." *Technovation*.)

⁶ [Justice40 Initiative | Department of Energy](#)



Competition to receive two complimentary passes to an industry conference and a cash award of \$4,000 to cover travel expenses to and from the conference.

Contest	Winners	Prize Pool
Power Up Awardee	Up to 10	\$3,000 in cash for each awardee, and the opportunity to participate in the Power Up Program
Power Up Program Graduate	Up to 10 of the Power Up teams	\$7,000 in cash for the Power Up Contest Awardees who complete and meet the requirements of the Power Up Program
Power Up Pitch Competition	1	\$4,000 and two complimentary passes to an industry conference for the winning Power Up Program Graduate team

Power Up Program

The second portion of the Power Up Contest will consist of the Power Up Program. The Prize Administrators will subcontract with a Power Connector⁷ in the American-Made Network to host a program of support tailored to the Power Up Awardees. The program will include up to six sessions of webinars and online content, each covering a different topic over 12 weeks. Topics will be determined after the Power Connector(s) engage with each Power Up Awardee and conduct a needs assessment.

During the program, Power Up Awardees will also engage in one-on-one mentorship with subject-matter experts and mentors and receive guidance on working with national laboratories.

To receive the Power Up Program Graduate Award, Power Up Awardee teams must complete the following:

- Meet the attendance requirements of the Power Up Program (described below)
- Complete the HeroX submission form
- Submit the Power Up Growth Paper.

Attendance Requirements	
<i>Attendance during the Power Up Program is tracked and reported by Power Connectors.</i>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in at least half of the Power Up Program webinars by attending the webinars. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend half of the total number of sessions across of the course (attendance tracked by Power Connector).⁸

⁷ See [Section 1.6](#) for the definition of Power Connector.

⁸ In the event that a team cannot attend a session that may result in not meeting the attendance requirements, they can reach out to the Power Connector and the Prize Administrator about taking a



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power Up Awardees will meet with a mentor and/or subject-matter expert at least five times over the course of the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with mentors at least five times, verified by mentor.
--	--

Power Connector(s) will track the Awardees' attendance during both the program and their mentor engagement, and will report on it to the Prize Administrator each week.

Power Up Awardees will submit the Power Up Growth Paper (details included in the following table) at the conclusion of the Power Up Program on HeroX. This paper will be reviewed by DOE.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6
Power Up Growth Paper (two pages maximum)					
<p style="text-align: center;">Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How you advanced your solution during the Power Up Program How you advanced your value proposition and business model during the Power Up Program How you advanced your customer and/or partnership discovery during the Power Up Program How you utilized resources in the program 			<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The team shows significant improvements to their value proposition across the program. The team shows significant improvements to their customer and/or partnership discovery across the program. The team shows significant improvements in their business model across the program. The team meaningfully engaged in the resources available to them through the Power Up Program and substantially advanced their solution over the course of the program. 		
Mentor Recommendation					
<p>There is no corresponding submission requirement for this criterion, but based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your overall level of engagement in the program and leveraging available resources, and Progress demonstrated in your solution, business model, and customer discovery, 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The team demonstrates significant improvement after participating in the Power Up Program. 		

make-up course. These requests will only be accepted if received ahead of the anticipated missed session(s), except in the case of an emergency, which will require documentation.



the mentors from the Power Connector will provide a recommendation on whether each team should receive the Power Up Graduate Award.	
---	--

The Prize Administrator will send the attendance to the selection official, who will determine whether the team has met the criteria of the program. DOE is the judge, selection official, and final decision maker and may elect to award all, none, or some of the submissions accepted at each submission deadline.

Teams who have met the requirements by the selection official’s determination will then be awarded the Power Up Contest Graduate Award as they participate in the prep for the Pitch Competition.

Power Up Pitch Competition - What To Submit and Evaluation Criteria

The Pitch Competition will be a private event and will be open only to the Power Up competitors, Power Connectors, Prize Administrators, DOE, and the selection official. Teams will submit the following materials on the HeroX platform 1 week prior to the competition:

- HeroX submission form (public portions denoted in submission form).

General Pitch Competition Requirement – Teams will be ineligible for selection if these requirements are not met:

- Each team must complete the Power Up Program to participate in and win the Pitch Competition.
- Each team will have 5 minutes to give their pitch with an accompanying slide deck. A practice session will be conducted to avoid any technical issues prior to the competition.

Note: Portions of the submission package are made available to the public. These have been denoted as such, and DOE does not intend to release the remaining parts of the submission to the public. See Appendix 1 for additional details.

Reviewers and the selection official will evaluate your submission by agreeing or disagreeing with assigned statements on a scale, as shown below. These statements are the criteria.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6



Pitch Presentation – 5-Minute Pitch

Suggested content you provide	Evaluation criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the real-world problem you are solving. • Describe your solution and why it is transformational compared to existing solutions. • Explain the features of your innovation and how it works. Discuss its expected functionality. • What impact will this innovation have? • What is the scale of the opportunity, and what is your target market? • Who are you, and why do you have a competitive edge? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pitch explains a compelling real-world problem and solution. • The pitch explains an exciting innovation. • The pitch clearly describes the features of the innovation. • The impact of the innovation on community, jobs, and/or domestic markets was well explained. • The pitch identifies a reasonable target market and a path toward making a significant impact on the U.S. solar industry. • The pitch shows a knowledgeable and skillful team.

Reviewer Recommendation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no direct corresponding submission requirement for this score. Rather, it is an overall assessment of the total potential impact of the innovation compared to the team’s likelihood of success. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The submission demonstrates an impactful solution with a strong likelihood of success and should be strongly considered for the Power-Up Pitch Competition prize.
---	---

Power Up Pitch Competition Scoring

The scoring of submissions will proceed as follows:

- A panel of expert reviewers watches the pitches, scores, and comments on each submission. The pitches receive scores based on the bulleted list of statements above. The bullets guide the single overall score. The final score from an individual reviewer for a submission package equals the total weighted sum of the scores for all the sections. All reviewers’ scores are then averaged for a final reviewer score for the submission package. The selection official considers reviewer scores when deciding the winners. DOE is the judge, selection official, and final decision maker and may elect to award all, none, or some of the submissions accepted at each submission deadline.
 - Reviewers may not have personal or financial interests in, or be an employee, officer, director, or agent of, any entity that is a registered participant in this contest or have a familial or financial relationship with an individual who is a registered competitor.



Note: Expert reviewers will also provide comments on the submissions they review. The Prize Administrator intends to provide comments to competitors after the winners are announced. These comments are intended to help competitors continue to improve and iterate on their submissions. The comments are the opinions of the expert reviewers and do not represent the opinions of DOE.

1.6 American-Made Network and Awards for Connectors

The American-Made Network cultivates resources and builds connections that enhance, accelerate, and amplify competitors' efforts. The objective is to link participants with the people, resources, financing, perspectives, and industry expertise necessary for long-term success.

The Network is composed of the following elements:

1. **Prize and Network Administrator (NREL):** DOE has partnered with NREL to administer the Solar Prize. NREL, as the administrator, helps competitors locate and leverage the vast array of national laboratory resources. NREL also connects elements of the Network with the competitors, as described below.
2. **Vouchers:** Following the Go! Contest announcement, finalists who are eligible and who submitted to the Go! Contest will receive vouchers they may use to fund work at national laboratories and other facilities to accelerate the production, improvement, or validation of their prototypes. Entities interested in helping competitors through the voucher program can visit the following website for details: <https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8/resources>.
3. **Connectors:** Connectors are entities capable of identifying and recruiting contest participants, as well as supporting competitors on their innovation journeys. Connectors can be incubators, universities, think tanks, industry groups, or any enabler seeking to help competitors succeed by performing support activities, such as:
 - Attracting a diverse range of talented individuals to compete in the contest
 - Helping competitors refine their innovations, develop business plans, work with mentors, and connect with investors and industry partners
 - Raising nonfederal funding to support this program and its participants
 - Providing in-kind resources, tools, and facilities to accelerate competitors' abilities to innovate, test, and refine their solutions while reducing technology and business risks
 - Connecting competitors to regional prototyping and manufacturing expertise, facilities, and professionals
 - Supporting competitors' understanding of the needs of underserved communities and how to incorporate inclusive and justice-focused principles into the team.

Connectors that support participants who win the Ready! Contest or compete in the Set! or Go! Contests are financially rewarded based on the table below.



Connector Recognition Reward Opportunities:

Recognition Reward Name	Anticipated Number of Rewards	Dollar Amounts	Details*
Mobilize	Up to one per winning Ready! competitor (20 competitors)	\$5,000 per competitor	Distributed to Connectors who recruit and/or support competitors who go on to win the Ready! Contest.
	Up to one per winning Power Up competitor (10 competitors)	\$2,000 per competitor	Distributed to Connectors who recruit and/or support competitors who go on to win the Power Up Contest.
Set! Mentor	Up to one per winning Set! competitor (10 competitors)	\$7,500 per competitor	Can be divided among up to three Connectors that are identified as significant supporters by Set! Contest winners.
	Up to one per non-winning Set! competitor (10 competitors)	\$3,000 per competitor	Can be evenly divided among up to three Connectors that are identified as significant supporters by competitors who competed in but did not win the Set! Contest.
Go! Mentor	Up to one per winning Go! competitor (two competitors)	\$10,000 per competitor	Can be divided among up to three Connectors that are identified as significant supporters by Go! Contest winners.
	Up to one per non-winning Go! competitor (eight competitors)	\$4,500 per competitor	Can be evenly divided among up to three Connectors that are identified as significant supporters by competitors who competed in but did not win the Go! Contest.
*Power Connectors and national labs are ineligible to receive Recognition Rewards.			

Competitors and reviewers in any given round cannot also be a Connector for that round. If a Connector formally joins a team, they forego any financial incentive and recognition payment for that round. The Connector must be on the list of approved Connectors on the American-Made Solar Prize website to receive a Recognition Reward. Competitors are asked to identify Connectors that have significantly helped them compete in any of the Solar Prize contests when they submit their application. Connectors may be asked to self-nominate teams they support. Such assistance may include mentoring; coaching; helping craft a submission package; identifying specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely (SMART) goals; exploring voucher opportunities; and making introductions to investors, partners, researchers, experts, or potential customers.



If a competitor does not receive significant support from a Connector, there is no obligation for a competitor to identify a Connector. A competitor should identify a Connector only if a Connector helped them compete in the contest. If a competitor does not designate a Connector and/or confirm that a self-nominated Connector provided support, no Recognition Rewards will be disbursed. Power Connectors are ineligible to receive payments, even if a winning team lists them on their submission.

Entities interested in participating as Connectors can visit the following site for details:
<https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8/resource/1876/resources>.

4. **Power Connectors:** Power Connectors are Connectors who play a more substantial role in the competition and receive funds to expand and amplify DOE's and NREL's efforts. Power Connectors operate under a contract with NREL and may be selected to host a national Demo Day. These stakeholders work to identify and support participants in the Ready!, Set!, and Go! Contests; develop a program for Power Up competitors and provide them with access to top-tier mentors; and partner with NREL to envision and execute a long-term sustainable strategy for scaling the American-Made Challenges program. Power Connectors are ineligible for all Recognition Rewards. Power Connectors' efforts include:

- Increasing the number of new, high-quality competitors
- Expanding the network of partners, resources, and tools
- Increasing the diversity of funding sources for competitors and the program
- Producing engaging and well-attended national Demo Day showcases
- Expanding the number of manufacturing and technological challenges addressable by the program
- Providing leadership and support within the increasingly robust American-Made Network.

Entities interested in becoming Power Connectors can visit the following website for details:
<https://americanmadechallenges.org/network>.

1.7 Important Dates

These rules are applicable to Solar Prize Round 8. Please visit <https://americanmadechallenges.org/challenges>, scroll down to the list of all prizes, and select the relevant round to view the key dates for each round of the prize.

1.8 Eligibility Requirements

Competitors in the Solar Prize must comply with the eligibility requirements below. By uploading a submission package, a competitor certifies that they are in compliance with these eligibility requirements. Eligibility is subject to verification before prizes are awarded. As soon as the Prize Administrator becomes aware that a competitor is not eligible to win the Ready!, Set!, or Go! Contest, the competitor may be disqualified. The registered competitor is the individual or entity that registers in HeroX to compete.

In keeping with the goal of growing a community of innovators, competitors are encouraged to form diverse, multidisciplinary teams while developing their concepts. The HeroX platform provides a space where parties interested in collaboration can post information about themselves and learn about others who are also interested in competing in this contest.

Ready! Contest Eligibility



- Individuals, teams of individuals, private entities (for-profits and nonprofits), and nonfederal government entities (such as states, counties, Tribes, municipalities, and academic institutions) are eligible to compete in the Ready! Contest.
- A single competitor or team may submit a maximum of three submissions. If more than three submissions are received from a single competitor or team, the three most recently submitted submissions will be considered.

Set! Contest Eligibility

- Only winners of the Ready! Contest are eligible to compete in the Set! Contest.⁹
- Competitors must be a for-profit business entity, such as a corporation or other organization, that is formed in and maintains a primary place of business in the United States with majority domestic ownership and control. A for-profit business entity is eligible to compete only if it includes a winner of the Ready! Contest as an employee or owner. Individuals or groups of individuals are not eligible to compete.
- If a team pivots from the idea they submitted in the Ready! Contest, they must still meet the [Alignment With Program Goals](#) to remain eligible.
- At least one representative from a competitor organization must participate in the competition interview day. The Set! Interview Day will be a virtual event.

Go! Contest Eligibility

- Only the winning for-profit business entities of the Set! Contest are eligible to compete in the Go! Contest.
- Competitors must be a for-profit business entity, such as a corporation or other organization, that is formed in and maintains a primary place of business in the United States with majority domestic ownership and control. Individuals or groups of individuals are not eligible to compete.
- A committed partnership that demonstrates the commercial viability of the innovation is required and must be part of the submission package. For hardware solutions, a committed partnership could be a signed contract, a purchase order, or a signed letter from a pilot partner with a guaranteed commitment to pilot test without contingencies. For software solutions, a committed partnership could be evidence of credible customers in the form of executed customer agreements or payment receipts. The committed partnership must be from an entity that is not represented by a team member on the submission package or anyone that has personal, familial, or social ties to the competitor. The entity must perform its work in the United States. Competitors should submit the strongest possible documentation to meet this requirement. DOE and NREL will not provide a preliminary review. A team will not be eligible to win the Go! Contest if this requirement is deemed unfulfilled. More details on this requirement will be provided prior to the start of the Go! Contest.
- If a team pivots from the idea they submitted in the Set! Contest, they must still meet the [Alignment With Program Goals](#) to remain eligible.

⁹ For purposes of this requirement, winners are defined as the key project members listed on the cover page of the team's winning Ready! submission package.



- At least one representative from each competitor organization must participate in the Go! Demo Day. The Go! Demo Day may be an in-person event; competitors must be willing to be flexible with potential travel. The Prize Administrator informs all competitors about Demo Day details as soon as information becomes available to ensure that there is plenty of time to make travel arrangements.

JEDI Contest Eligibility

- Only winners of the Ready! Contest are eligible to be winners of the JEDI Contest at that stage.
- Only winners of the Set! Contest are eligible to be winners of the JEDI Contest at that stage.
- In the Go! Contest, a JEDI Contest winner is selected from the pool of Go! Contest competitors. A Go! Contest competitor may win the JEDI Contest without winning the Go! Contest.

Power Up Contest Eligibility

- All contest-eligible competitors who are not selected as winners of the Ready! Contest are eligible to receive a Power Up Contest Awardee prize, except:
 - Competitors can only win the Power Up Contest if they have never won the Ready! Contest in any previous rounds of the American-Made Solar Prize and have not previously won the Power Up Contest.
- Competitors who win the Power Up Contest will not be eligible to compete in the Set! or Go! Contests in the same round of the American-Made Solar Prize.
- Only competitors who win a Power Up Contest Awardee prize can win the Power Up Contest Program Graduate Award.
- Only competitors who win a Power Up Contest Graduate Award can compete in the Power Up Pitch Competition.
- If a team pivots from the idea they submitted in the Ready! Contest, they must still meet the [Alignment With Program Goals](#) to remain eligible for the Power Up Pitch Competition.

All Contests Eligibility

- Individuals, private entities (for-profits and nonprofits), and nonfederal government entities (such as states, counties, Tribes, municipalities, and academic institutions) are subject to the following requirements:
 - An individual prize competitor (who is not competing as a member of a group) must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
 - A group of individuals competing as one team may win, provided that the online account holder of the submission is a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident. Individuals competing as part of a team may participate if they are legally authorized to work in the United States.
 - Private entities must be incorporated in and maintain a primary place of business in the United States.
 - Academic institutions must be based in the United States.
 - All teams must confirm that the majority of activities that are described in and support the submission package are performed in the United States and have the potential to benefit the United States solar market.
- DOE employees and DOE support service contractors, individuals who have been employed by DOE, or individuals working for DOE as a support service contractor within 6 months prior to the



submission deadline of the Ready! Contest are not eligible to participate in any prize contests in this program.

- DOE employees, employees of sponsoring organizations, members of their immediate families (e.g., spouses, children, siblings, or parents), and persons living in the same household as such persons, whether or not related, are not eligible to participate in the prize.
- NREL employees directly involved in the administration of the prize are not eligible to participate in any prize contest in this program. Receipt of voucher funds is not considered participation in this prize program.
- NREL employees not involved in the administration of the prize and all other national lab employees, including laboratory researchers, may participate as private individuals, provided they do not use their facilities at the national laboratories.
- Non-DOE federal entities and federal employees are also not eligible to win any prize contests in this program.
- Federal grantees may not use federal funds to develop submissions.
- Federal contractors may not use federal funds from a contract to develop prize competition submissions or fund efforts in support of a prize competition submission.
- A participating entity shall not be deemed ineligible because the entity used federal facilities or consulted with federal employees during a competition if the facilities and employees are made available to all entities participating in the competition on an equitable basis.
- Evaluation entities are ineligible to compete as prize participants.
- Entities and individuals publicly banned from doing business with the U.S. government, such as entities and individuals debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participating in federal programs, are not eligible to compete.
- Individuals participating in a foreign government talent recruitment program¹⁰ sponsored by a country of risk¹¹ and teams that include such individuals are not eligible to compete.
- Entities owned by, controlled by, or subject to the jurisdiction or direction of a government of a country of risk are not eligible to compete.
- As part of your submission to this prize, you will be required to sign the following statement:

I am providing this submission package as part of my participation in this prize. I understand that the information contained in this submission will be relied on by the federal government to determine whether to issue a prize to the named competitor. I certify under penalty of perjury

¹⁰ A Foreign Government-Sponsored Talent Recruitment Program is defined as an effort directly or indirectly organized, managed, or funded by a foreign government, or a foreign government instrumentality or entity, to recruit science and technology professionals or students (regardless of citizenship or national origin, or whether having a full-time or part-time position). Some foreign-government-sponsored talent recruitment programs operate with the intent to import or otherwise acquire from abroad, sometimes through illicit means, proprietary technology or software, unpublished data and methods, and intellectual property to further the military modernization goals and/or economic goals of a foreign government. Many, but not all, programs aim to incentivize the targeted individual to relocate physically to the foreign state for the above purpose. Some programs allow for or encourage continued employment at United States research facilities or receipt of federal research funds while concurrently working at and/or receiving compensation from a foreign institution, and some direct participants not to disclose their participation to U.S. entities. Compensation could take many forms, including cash, research funding, complimentary foreign travel, honorific titles, career advancement opportunities, promised future compensation, or other types of remuneration or consideration, including in-kind compensation.

¹¹ DOE has designated the following countries as foreign countries of risk: Iran, North Korea, Russia, and China. This list is subject to change.



that the named competitor meets the eligibility requirements for this prize competition and complies with all other rules contained in the Official Rules document. I further represent that the information contained in the submission is true and contains no misrepresentations. I understand false statements or misrepresentations to the federal government may result in civil and/or criminal penalties under 18 U.S.C. § 1001 and § 287, and 31 U.S.C. §§ 3729-3733 and 3801- 3812.

DOE may conduct a risk review, through government resources, of the competitor and project personnel to identify potential risks of foreign interference. The result(s) of a risk review may supersede the results of the prize competition, preventing DOE from selecting a submission or reversing the selection of a submission for a prize. The results of a risk review are not appealable.

1.9 Alignment With Program Goals

Only submissions relevant to the goals of this program are eligible to compete. The Prize Administrator must conclude that all the following statements are **true** when applied to your submission:

- The proposed solution is related to the solar power industry.
- The majority of activities that are described in and support the submission package are performed in the United States and have the potential to benefit the U.S. solar market.
- The proposed solution represents an innovation that will move the industry beyond its current state.
- The proposed solution will have a pathway to economic viability in the terrestrial power market.
- The proposed solution is not dependent on new, pending, or proposed federal, state, or local government legislation, resolutions, appropriations, measures, or policies.
- The proposed solution does not involve the lobbying of any federal, state, or local government office.
- The proposed solution is based on fundamental technical principles and is consistent with a basic understanding of the U.S. market economy.
- The submission content sufficiently confirms the competitor's intent to commercialize early-stage technology and establish a viable U.S.-based business in the near future, with revenues that do not solely depend on licensing fees of intellectual property.
- **JEDI Contest only (optional opportunity):** The approach to enabling underserved communities to overcome systemic solar barriers and share equitably in the societal benefits of solar deployment is clearly related to the competitor's submissions to the Ready!, Set!, and/or Go! Contests.

1.10 Find Help

Find the Power Connectors subcontracted for Solar Prize Round 8 on <https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8>.

1.11 Additional Requirements

Please read and comply with the additional requirements in [Appendix 1](#).

COMPETITORS WHO DO NOT COMPLY WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.



2 Ready! Contest Rules

2.1 Introduction

The Ready! Contest is the first in the American-Made Solar Prize three-contest series and has a total of \$1 million in cash prizes. Anyone who meets the eligibility requirements can compete in the Ready! Contest, but only winners of this contest (referred to as Ready! Contest winners or Solar Prize semifinalists) can compete in the subsequent Set! Contest. **The following rules are for competitors in the Ready! Contest.** “You” and “your” reference competitors in the contest.

Ready! Contest Prizes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Up to 20 semifinalists• \$1 million in total cash prizes; each semifinalist receives a cash prize of \$50,000• Optional JEDI Contest: \$100,000 in total cash prizes (see Section 1.4)• Power Up Contest: \$100,000 in total cash prizes (see Section 1.5).• Power Up Pitch Competition: \$4,000 cash prize and two industry conference passes to one winning team (see Section 1.5).

2.2 Goal

Rapidly transform an important problem from a conceptual or early-stage solution to a plan for building a proof of concept.

2.3 Prizes To Win

The Ready! Contest offers up to 20 cash prizes of \$50,000 each. In the Power Up Contest, up to 10 teams split a prize pool of \$100,000 cash.

2.4 How To Enter

To enter the competition, complete a **submission package** online at <https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8> before the contest closing date.

2.5 Ready! Contest Process

The Ready! Contest consists of three steps:

1. **Preparation and Submission** – Competitors identify a critical need in the solar industry, develop a transformative solution pathway, and make a plan to build a proof of concept for this solution. One-person teams can compete, but building a diverse, multidisciplinary team (whether it consists of advisors or part-time or full-time participants) may help strengthen capabilities and team competencies. Competitors are also encouraged to engage the American-Made Network to gain help and support, leveraging the potential for recognition payments to Connectors. Competitors must complete their submission packages and submit online before the Ready! Contest closes.¹²
2. **Assessment** – The Prize Administrator screens submissions for eligibility and completion and assigns subject-matter expert reviewers to independently score the content of each submission. The judging criteria assess the following (more details can be found in [Section 2.6](#)).

¹² Use of the template is optional; however, all components listed here must be included in your document if you chose to create your own.



- **Problem-Solution Fit:** Develop a proposed solution that addresses a real-world problem facing the solar industry. Perform substantive due diligence to gather feedback and validate that the proposed solution addresses that problem and is technically feasible.
 - **Team Capabilities:** The team has a demonstrated background and drive to accomplish the stated goals of the proposed solution.
 - **Network Engagement:** Cultivate relationships with members of the American-Made Network and/or other entities to maximize the likelihood of creating a viable business based on the proposed solution and enhance the quality of the submission package. The Network is there to help you succeed, and Connectors are rewarded for assisting you through Recognition Rewards, so do not hesitate to engage them to help make your solution better.
3. **Announcement** – After the semifinalists are publicly announced, the Prize Administrator notifies them and requests the necessary information to distribute cash prizes. After winning the Ready! Contest, semifinalists go on to develop their solutions in accordance with their plan to compete in the Set! Contest.

2.6 What To Submit and Evaluation Criteria

A complete submission package for the Ready! Contest should include the following items:

- Submission form, including Connector Recognition Reward nominations
 - Required question in the submission form: Does your company have any other current or pending federal government support for this or related work?¹³ If so, please specify:
 - The name of the funding opportunity
 - The proposed or awarded total project funds
 - Federal funds requested or received.
- 90-second video (to be made public)
- Cover page content
- Narrative that answers four questions about the problem, solution, team, and plan (not to exceed 2,500 words)
- JEDI Contest submission (optional but required for JEDI Contest consideration; not to exceed 500 words)
- One summary PowerPoint slide (to be made public)
- Letters of commitment or support.

All documents other than the video **must be uploaded as a PDF**.

Note: Portions of the submission package are made available to the public. These have been denoted as such, and DOE does not intend to release the remaining parts of the submission to the public. See [Appendix 1](#) for additional details.

¹³ Current and pending Federal Support includes all financial support made available to a company in support of and/or related to all of its project efforts. Information must be provided about all current and pending federal government support, including ongoing projects and proposals currently under consideration.



Reviewers and the selection official will evaluate your submissions by agreeing or disagreeing with assigned statements on a scale, as shown below. These statements are the criteria.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

For competitors opting into the JEDI Contest, each JEDI criterion will be scored individually and will receive equal weighting.

Note: This submission package is being reviewed by solar industry and entrepreneurial professionals. Cumulatively, they have decades of experience assessing novel ideas and solutions. However, their background may not be in the specific problem you are solving. Transition quickly from general background into the details of your problem, solution, and plan.

Reminder: Nominate Connectors for a Recognition Reward!
Remember that you can incentivize Connectors to help by agreeing to identify them on your submission form to receive a cash reward if you win the Ready! Contest. See the description of Recognition Rewards in [Section 1.6](#).

Online Public Video – What Is Your Innovation in 90 Seconds?	
<p style="text-align: center;">Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The real-world problem you are solving Your solution and why it is transformative Who you are and why you have a competitive edge [Optional, for JEDI Contest consideration] Describe the specific JEDI barriers that your solution is poised to address and how you will be successful. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The video explains a compelling real-world problem. The video describes a unique innovation that can achieve market entry within the next 3–5 years. The video shows a passionate, knowledgeable, and skillful team. [Optional, for JEDI Contest consideration] The video describes a compelling solution to stated JEDI barrier(s).

Post your *publicly accessible*, 90-second video online (YouTube preferred). Please note that if the link to your video cannot be accessed by the Prize Administrators, your submission will be marked ineligible for missing materials.

Be creative and produce a video that conveys the required information in exciting and interesting ways, but do not focus on time-consuming activities that only improve production values (i.e., technical elements such as décor, lighting, and cinematic techniques). Assistance from others with experience in



this area may be helpful. Members of the American-Made Network may be able to help you create your video.

<p>Cover Page – List Basic Information About Your Submission (required, but not scored) Template¹⁴: https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8/resources</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project name • Innovation tagline (e.g., your mission in a few words) • Link to your 90-second online video • Key project members (names, contacts, and links to their LinkedIn profiles) • Keywords that best describe your solution (e.g., agrivoltaics, microinverters, solar financing) • Your city, state, and nine-digit zip code • The partner(s), affiliate(s), and Connector(s)¹⁵ that significantly helped you advance your solution and the major items they helped with (if applicable) • Whether you would like to compete in the JEDI Contest.

You should answer each of the following four questions. The content bullets are only suggestions to guide your responses. You decide where to focus your answers. The individual answers to the four questions do not have a word limit; however, **the aggregate response to these four questions must not exceed 2,500 words**, not including captions, figures/graphs, and references. A word count must be included at the end of your submission (see template for details). You may also include **up to five supporting images, figures, or graphs**. The reviewers will score the questions based on the content you have provided.

<p>Narrative – Max 2,500 Words and Five Supporting Images or Figures (PDF) Template¹⁶: https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8/resources</p>	
<p>Question 1: <i>Problem</i> – What is the problem, and why is solving it important?</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the problem, quantify its significance with metrics, and explain why now is the right time to solve it. Be specific to the problem space that your innovation addresses.¹⁷ • Explain why existing solutions are inadequate. Be as technically specific as 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The competitor quantifies a critical problem with specific metrics and a compelling analysis of its urgency. • The competitor’s assessment of current solutions and their limitations shows a comprehensive understanding of the existing problem-solution space.

¹⁴ Use of the template is optional; however, all components listed here must be included in your document if you chose to create your own.

¹⁵ See description of a Connector in [Section 1.6](#).

¹⁶ Use of the template is optional; however, all components listed here must be included in your document if you chose to create your own.

¹⁷ Avoid providing general background on the rapid growth of the solar industry or other high-level trends with which the reviewers are well versed.



<p>possible to your innovation area, providing examples where possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show how you know this is a significant problem using evidence-based validation (e.g., interviews with users, case studies, literature). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The competitor uses real-world evidence to validate key assumptions about the need for their solution.
--	--

Question 2: Solution – What is your solution, and why will it be successful?

Suggested content you provide	Evaluation criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how your solution is superior to existing or emerging solutions described in Question 1. • Describe your innovation in as much detail as possible. • Describe how your innovation compares against the current state of the art or commercially relevant competition. • Describe your innovation’s unique value proposition and how it will lead to a sustainable business with paying customers. • Define the proof of concept you will produce by the Set! Demo Day and explain what risks and critical failures would cause you to reconsider your approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient technical detail was provided to understand the underlying principles of operation of the innovation. • The solution represents an innovative approach built on reasonable assumptions, valid technical foundations, and lessons learned from other notable efforts in this space. • The competitor is pursuing an innovative and compelling solution that will lead to a sustainable business with paying customers. • The planned Set! Demo Day proof of concept is appropriately ambitious and validates the critical assumptions necessary to advance.

Question 3: Accomplishments and Team – What have you done to date, who are you, and what qualities give you a competitive edge?

Suggested content you provide	Evaluation criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe your efforts to advance your solution since or prior to the announcement of the prize, and highlight key learnings and/or milestones achieved. • Explain why winning the Ready! Contest will substantively change the likely outcome for the proposed solution. • Introduce your team, explain how it came together, and highlight the knowledge, experience, and skills that make it capable of achieving success. • What experience do you have trying new things, solving difficult problems, and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A considerable amount of high-quality effort was put into defining and advancing the proposed solution. • The team has provided a clear explanation of how winning the Ready! Contest will significantly increase their chances of creating a viable business based on this solution. • The team’s track record demonstrates notable entrepreneurial qualities such as adaptability, creativity, decisiveness, passion, and resourcefulness. • The team’s commitment to diversity is



<p>overcoming barriers to bring ideas to reality?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss your team’s diversity and plans to build upon your team’s diversity in the future. • Describe what drives your team to realize this solution and why you will continue when facing difficulties. 	<p>evident in its current makeup (including advisors and partners), as well as in its long- and short-term plans for future recruitment, collaboration, and other related internal diversity strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team has the knowledge, experience, and determination to transform their proposed solution into a viable business in the near future.
---	--

Note: All Solar Prize competitors are encouraged to incorporate diversity and inclusion principles into their organization’s vision, mission, policies, and processes. Diversity of geographic locations where competitors innovate and build companies is also an important consideration for team diversity. Competitors who are located in or are building a presence in opportunity zones—economically distressed communities defined by census tract—are encouraged to highlight this.

<p align="center">Question 4: <i>Plan</i> – What is your plan to achieve your goals?</p>	
<p align="center">Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe where you stand in your solution’s development cycle, and define goals for Set! and Go! deadline days and a 1-year goal (see special instructions below). If your team has received DOE funding in the last 5 years for a similar solution, discuss how you have used those funds to date and how your goals during the Solar Prize would complement prior funds. • Describe your team’s readiness to meet your goals and whether your team requires additional talent and resources. • Provide a high-level budget and plan to meet your goals between the conclusion of the Ready! Contest and the Go! Demo Day, including how you will leverage program resources, members of the American-Made Network, or other entities (include references to letters of support/commitment if applicable). Include a plan for assessment and feedback from many relevant 	<p align="center">Evaluation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The stated goals are ambitious, reduce risks, show a commitment to an accelerated development cycle, and build upon prior funding (if applicable). • Meeting the stated goals will demonstrate critical progress toward developing, testing, and validating the functionality and market demand of this innovation. • The proposed plan effectively uses the resources available in this program to advance the innovation. • Sufficient risks to the development plan have been identified, and reasonable risk mitigation strategies have been described.



<p>stakeholders (e.g., possible investors, customers, and experts in the solution space, and entities that would be the eventual customers or end users of the product).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe risks to the development plan and mitigation strategies (e.g., data requirements and plans to acquire the necessary data). 	
--	--

Reviewer Recommendation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no direct corresponding submission requirement for this score. Rather, it is an overall assessment of the total potential impact of the innovation compared to the team’s likelihood of success. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The submission demonstrates a potentially impactful solution. The submission demonstrates a strong likelihood of success.

Special Instructions for Question 4

- Use only specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely (SMART outcome-based goals, not activity-based goals, so that a neutral third party can validate them.
 - For example: Demonstrate a definitive achievement of progress (e.g., “X letters of interest signed” or “achieve Y% efficiency”); do **not** describe how you spent your time (e.g., “provide a report,” “talk to customers,” or “perform experiments”).
- SMART goals for the Go! Contest Demo Day should include demonstrating a functional prototype based on learning throughout the competition and securing at least one committed pilot partner.
- In defining your SMART goals, include quantified, risk-reducing, meaningful, practical, and testable interim milestones.
- Members of the American-Made Network may be able to help you formulate your SMART goals.

JEDI Submission (Optional, Required for JEDI Contest Consideration) – 500 words max	
<p style="text-align: center;">Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe your organization’s unique value proposition(s) to underserved communities, how these propositions will lead to a sustainable business with paying customers, and how you validated your assumptions. Describe how your organization is integrating JEDI principles into your innovation. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The competitor is pursuing an innovative and compelling solution to expand solar access in underserved communities. The competitor quantifies a critical JEDI problem, and their assessment of current solutions shows a comprehensive understanding of the opportunity space.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes your team uniquely capable of addressing issues of solar adoption in underserved communities? • Define JEDI goals for Set! and Go! deadline days (based on the schedule listed in Section 1.6) and a 1-year goal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team is uniquely capable of addressing issues of solar adoption in underserved communities. • The stated JEDI goals are SMART.
JEDI Contest Reviewer Recommendation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no direct corresponding submission requirement for the final JEDI Contest Reviewer Recommendation score. Rather, it is an overall assessment of the total potential impact of the JEDI submission compared to the team's likelihood of success. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This innovation, team, and plan should be strongly considered for a JEDI Contest prize.

Submission Summary Slide (a PowerPoint Slide as a PDF Will Be Made Public)
<p>Make your own public-facing, one-slide submission summary that contains technically specific details but can be understood by most people. There is no template, so feel free to present the information as you see fit. Please make any text readable in a standard printout and conference room projection.</p>

Letters of Commitment or Support (Optional)
<p>Attach one-page letters of support, intent, or commitment from relevant entities (e.g., potential users of the proposed innovation or strategic manufacturing partners) to provide context. Letters of support from partners or others that are critical to the success of your proposed solution will likely increase your score. General letters of support from parties that are not critical to the execution of your solution will likely not factor into your score. Please do not submit multi-page letters.</p>

Please read and comply with the additional requirements about your submission in [Appendix 1](#).

COMPETITORS WHO DO NOT COMPLY WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.

2.7 Scoring Process

The scoring of submissions will proceed as follows:

- A panel of expert reviewers reads, scores, and comments on each submission. Each bullet listed in the review criteria under the video submission and the narrative questions receives a score. The bullets have equal weight, so questions that have more review criteria bullets have a greater influence on the final score. The final score from an individual reviewer for a submission package



equals the sum of the scores for all the bullets. All reviewers' scores will then be averaged for a final reviewer score for the submission package.

- Reviewers may not have personal or financial interests in, or be an employee, officer, director, or agent of, any entity that is a registered participant in this contest, or have a familial or financial relationship with an individual who is a registered competitor.

Note: Expert reviewers also provide comments on the submissions they review. The Prize Administrator intends to provide comments to competitors after the winners are announced. These comments are intended to help competitors to continue to improve and iterate on their submissions. The comments are the opinions of the expert reviewers and do not represent the opinions of DOE.

- Interviews: The Prize Administrator, at its sole discretion, may decide to hold a short interview with a subset of the Ready! Contest competitors. Interviews would be held prior to the announcement of winners and would serve to help clarify questions the selection official may have. Attending interviews is not required, and interviews are not an indication of winning. DOE is the judge, selection official, and final decision maker and may elect to award all, none, or some of the submissions accepted at each submission deadline. The selection official considers reviewer scores when deciding the winners of the prize.

2.8 Power Up Contest

The Power Up Contest is a contest designed to support and advance new and diverse teams that have compelling applications but are not selected as semifinalists in the Ready! Contest. Recipients of this prize are encouraged to use the Power Up Prize to further refine their submission package for potential future editions of the American-Made Solar Prize or to identify alternative American-Made Prizes or other funding opportunities that may better fit their innovations. For full details on the Power Up Contest, see [Section 1.5](#).

- Prizes To Win: Up to 10 teams can win up to \$10,000 each as well as tailored support from Power Connector(s).
- How To Enter: The same submission package for the Ready! Contest is used to evaluate the Power Up Contest. Competitors who want to be considered for this program will answer “yes” and respond to the following question in the HeroX submission:

The Power Up Contest offers a program for tailored business support and up to \$10,000 to 10 competitors who are not selected for Ready! but demonstrate a solution and team with potential. Would your team like to be considered for the Power Up Program if selected as a Power Up Awardee? If yes, please summarize in no more than 100 words what the benefit of the program would be for your team. Please note that opting in to the Power Up Contest will not take you out of consideration for winning a Ready! award.

- Power Up Contest Process: The same contest process as the Ready! Contest. The Prize Administrator will screen for eligibility based on the requirements stated in [Section 1.8](#). Announcements of Power Up Contest Awardees will be made at the same time as the Ready! Contest prize winners.
- Power Up Evaluation Criteria:



Power Up Contest Awardee	
<p>Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no direct corresponding submission requirement for this score. Rather, it is an overall assessment of the Ready! Contest application package. 	<p>Evaluation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The team was not selected as a Ready! winner in this round of the American-Made Solar Prize. The team shows great potential and is working on a promising idea that has capacity for significant improvements. The team will greatly benefit from the cash prize and the business development support that will be provided to the Power Up Contest Awardees. The team represents individuals with diverse expertise, perspectives, and experiences.

- Power Up scoring process: same scoring process as the Ready! Contest.

Power Up Awardees will win \$3,000 and tailored support and mentorship from Power Connectors over a multi-week program. Upon completing the Power Up Program and meeting its requirements, awardees can win an additional \$7,000.

The Power Up Program will be followed by a virtual private Pitch Competition, The Pitch Competition will give the teams an opportunity to demonstrate what they’ve learned in the Power Up Program and showcase how they’ve grown to the selection official. The Power Up Program will include dedicated mentorship around giving pitches and tailoring a pitch to a specific audience, as well as slide deck review, practice sessions, and more, to prepare teams for the competition. The selection official will attend the competition and review the pitches with a panel of external experts and will select one winner of the Pitch Competition to receive two passes to an industry conference and a cash award of \$4,000 to cover travel expenses to and from the conference. See [Section 1.5](#) for more details. DOE is the judge, selection official, and final decision maker and may elect to award all, none, or some of the submissions accepted at each submission deadline.

2.9 Find Help

Find the Power Connectors subcontracted for Solar Prize Round 8 on <https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8>.

2.10 Additional Requirements

Please read and comply with the additional requirements in [Appendix 1](#).

COMPETITORS WHO DO NOT COMPLY WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.



3 Set! Contest Rules

3.1 Introduction

The Set! Contest is the second in the American-Made Solar Prize three-contest series, and it offers a total of \$1 million in cash prizes. Only winners of the Ready! Contest can compete in the Set! Contest. These winners may be referred to as Ready! Contest winners or American-Made Solar Prize semifinalists. Winning the Set! Contest is required to compete in the Go! Contest. **The following rules are for competitors interested in the Set! Contest. “You” and “your” refer to competitors in the contest.**

Set! Contest Prizes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Up to 10 winners• \$1 million in total cash prizes; each winner receives a cash prize of \$100,000• Optional JEDI Contest: \$50,000 in total cash prizes (see Section 1.4).

3.2 Goal

The goal of the Set! Contest period is focused on three key areas:

- **Proof of Concept:** Develop a proof of concept that proves critical solution functionality and that can be demonstrated in a video presentation and/or in person. For software solutions, a proof of concept could be a minimum viable product that proves critical solution functionality.
- **Customer Discovery:** Perform a rigorous customer discovery process to uncover key insights from entities that would be the eventual customers or end users of the product.
- **Network Activation:** Cultivate a network of mentors and partners to help advance the proposed solution, which can include national laboratories, members of the American-Made Network, funders, and private partners.

Additionally, you will prove the market demand for your innovation, show the viability of your business case, and identify a path to validate and pilot test your solution.

3.3 Prizes To Win

The Set! Contest offers up to 10 cash prizes of \$100,000 each.

3.4 How To Enter

Complete a submission package online at <https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8> before the contest closing date.

3.5 Set! Contest Process

The Set! Contest consists of five steps:



1. **Progress and Submit** – Competitors work with the American-Made Network¹⁸ to advance their solutions as much as possible. Competitors then create their Set! Contest submission packages and submit them online before the Set! Contest Demo Day.
2. **Preliminary Review** – All completed submissions are assigned to subject-matter expert reviewers. Reviewers independently review and score each submission, then participate in the Interview Day event and provide feedback.
3. **Virtual Interview Day** – Competitors participate in a virtual Interview Day event with a panel of expert reviewers and members of the public. The details and agenda for the event are provided 30 days before the event.
4. **Selection** – The selection official selects up to 10 winners, considering the written submissions, performance at the Interview Day, and expert reviewer feedback.
5. **Announcement** – The Prize Administrator announces the winners after the Interview Day. After receiving the Set! Contest prize, winners can develop their solutions in accordance with their plan to compete in the Go! Contest.

3.6 What To Submit and Evaluation Criteria

A complete submission for the Set! Contest must include the following items:

Item	Content
Submission Package	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission form, including Connector Recognition Reward nominations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Required question in submission form: Does your company have any other current or pending federal government support for this or related work?¹⁹ If so, please specify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The name of the funding opportunity ▪ The proposed or awarded total project funds ▪ Federal funds requested or received. • 5-minute pitch and technical demonstration video (public) • Cover page content • Narrative that answers four questions about the <i>problem and solution, innovation, team, and plan</i> (not to exceed 2,500 words) • JEDI Contest submission (optional but required for JEDI Contest consideration; not to exceed 500 words) • Summary PowerPoint slide (public) • Voucher Work Slide • Letters of commitment or support (optional).
Virtual Interview Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Set! Interview Day question-and-answer (Q&A) session

¹⁸ The Prize Administrator has dedicated approximately \$260,000 to recognize members of the American-Made Network that help competitors advance through the contests.

¹⁹ Current and pending Federal Support includes all financial support made available to a company in support of and/or related to all of its project efforts. Information must be provided about all current and pending federal government support, including ongoing projects and proposals currently under consideration.



Note: Portions of the submission package are made available to the public. These have been denoted as such, and DOE does not intend to release the remaining parts of the submission to the public. See [Appendix 1](#) for additional details.

All documents other than the video must be uploaded as a PDF.

The following details provide more guidance on what information to provide and how expert reviewers and the selection official will evaluate and score your submission. Expert Reviewers will evaluate your submission by assigning a single score for each scored submission section, based on their overall agreement or disagreement with a series of statements.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

The score for each section will be weighted as follows:

Section	Weight
Pitch and Demo Video	25%
Narrative Question 1 – Problem and Solution	15%
Narrative Question 2 – Innovation	20%
Narrative Question 3 – Team	15%
Narrative Question 4 – Plan	20%
Reviewer Recommendation	5%

For competitors opting into the JEDI Contest, each JEDI criterion will be scored individually and will receive equal weighting.

Note: This submission package is being reviewed by solar industry and entrepreneurial professionals. Cumulatively, they have decades of experience assessing novel ideas and solutions. However, their background may not be in the specific problem you are solving. Transition quickly from general background into the details of your problem, solution, and plan.

Reminder: Nominate Connectors for a Recognition Reward!

Remember that you can incentivize Connectors to help by agreeing to identify them on your submission form to receive a cash reward. See the description of Recognition Rewards in [Section 1.6](#).

Pitch and Demo Video – 5-Minute Pitch on Your Innovation, Company, and Proof-of-Concept Demonstration (Public)

If you opted in for JEDI Contest consideration, add up to 1 minute to your pitch (6 minutes total).

Suggested content you provide	Evaluation criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A demonstration of the proof of concept. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The video demonstrates a proof of concept for an exciting innovation.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the features of your proof of concept and how it works. Demonstrate its functionality or testing of its known possible failure modes. • What progress has been made over the competition period? • Describe the real-world problem you are solving. • Describe your solution and why it is transformational compared to existing solutions. • What is the scale of the opportunity, and what is your target market? • Who are you, and why do you have a competitive edge? • [Optional, for JEDI Contest consideration] Describe the specific JEDI barriers your solution addresses and why you will be successful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proof of concept has retired significant technical risk. • Progress has been demonstrated during the competition period. • The video explains a compelling real-world problem and solution. • The video identifies a reasonable target market and a path to making a significant impact on the U.S. solar industry. • The video shows a knowledgeable and skillful team. • [Optional, for JEDI Contest consideration, scored separately] The video describes a compelling solution to the stated JEDI barrier(s), and the team has made progress toward their JEDI goals.
---	--

Post your publicly accessible video online (YouTube preferred). Please note that if the link to your video cannot be accessed by the Prize Administrators, your submission will be marked ineligible for missing materials.

Be creative and produce a video that conveys the required information in exciting and interesting ways, but do not focus on time-consuming activities that only improve production values (i.e., technical elements such as décor, lighting, and cinematic techniques). Assistance from others with experience in this area may be helpful. Members of the American-Made Network may be able to help you create your video.

Cover Page – List Basic Information About Your Submission (required, but not scored)
Template²⁰: <https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8/resources> ²¹

- Project name
- Innovation tagline (e.g., your mission in a few words)
- Link to your online pitch video
- Key project members (names, contacts, and links to their LinkedIn profiles)
- Keywords that best describe your solution (e.g., agrivoltaics, microinverters, solar financing)
- Your city, state, and 9-digit zip code

²⁰ Use of the template is optional; however, all components listed here must be included in your document if you chose to create your own.

²¹ **Important:** Templates from the Ready! Contest have been updated for Set!.



- The partners, affiliates, and Connectors²² that significantly helped you²³ advance your solution and the major items they helped with (if applicable)
- Whether you would like to compete in the JEDI Contest.

You should answer each of the following four questions. The content bullets are only suggestions to guide your responses. You decide where to focus your answers. The individual answers to the four questions do not have a word limit; however, **the aggregate response to these four questions must not exceed 2,500 words**, not including captions, figures/graphs, and references. **A word count must be included** at the end of your submission (see template for details). You may also include **up to five supporting graphs or charts**. The reviewers will score the questions based on the content you have provided.

Note: If your concept/innovation has substantially pivoted from your original submission, you must provide an explanation of how and why this happened. It is understood that innovation and entrepreneurship are not usually a linear path, but major changes in direction should always be well rationalized. You were selected based on the strengths of the idea submitted in the Ready! Contest, and significant changes without justification are unlikely to be successful.

Narrative (PDF) Max 2,500 Words and 5 Supporting Images or Figures Template²⁴: https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8/resources	
Question 1: <i>Problem and Solution</i> – What is the problem, and how are you solving it?	
<p style="text-align: center;">Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the problem, being specific to the problem space that your innovation addresses,²⁵ and why existing solutions are inadequate. • Describe your innovation and how it is better than existing products or emerging solutions. Show how you know this using evidence-based validation (e.g., interviews with users and experts). • Describe your innovation’s unique value propositions and how these will lead to a sustainable business with paying customers. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The competitor quantifies a critical problem, and their assessment of current solutions shows a comprehensive understanding of the problem-solution space. • The solution represents an innovative approach built on reasonable assumptions, a valid technical foundation, and lessons learned from experience gained.

²² See description of a Connector in [Section 1.6](#).

²³ Remember that you can incentivize Connectors to help by agreeing to identify them here (up to three) to receive a cash reward for that help, regardless of whether you win the Set! Contest. See the description of Recognition Rewards in [Section 1.6](#) and the [Connector Guidelines](#) for details.

²⁴ Use of the template is optional; however, all components listed here must be included in your document if you chose to create your own. The provided template has been updated from the Ready! Contest.

²⁵ Avoid providing general background on the rapid growth of the solar industry or other high-level trends with which the reviewers are well versed.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The competitor is pursuing an innovative and compelling solution, which will lead to a sustainable business with paying customers.
--	--

Question 2: Innovation – What progress have you made to prove your solution will be successful?

Suggested content you provide	Evaluation criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the current state of development of your proof of concept, its technical specifications, and sufficient underlying details on how it works to facilitate external evaluation of the performance claims you make.²⁶ For software solutions, provide instructions on how to access and use the software. Describe the progress made over the contest period and highlight key engagements, relationships, and milestones. Describe how you have validated your technical performance assumptions. Describe who gave feedback on your proof of concept, why it is important, and what changes you have made as a result of that feedback. Describe your business model, cost model, and potential price points. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufficient technical detail was provided to understand the underlying principles of operation of the innovation. The proof of concept is grounded in real-world assumptions and resolves critical technical risks. A considerable amount of high-quality effort was put into building a proof of concept and advancing the innovation. A rigorous customer discovery process was performed to uncover key insights and relevant feedback on the proof of concept. The assumptions around the business model and pricing are reasonable, achievable, and competitive.

Question 3: Team – What qualities give you a competitive edge, and how have you grown?

Suggested content you provide	Evaluation criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce your team and highlight the knowledge and skills that make the team uniquely capable of achieving success. Discuss your team’s diversity and plans to build upon your team’s diversity in the future. Describe how your team has evolved during the competition, including any strategic hires or partnerships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The team’s drive, knowledge, and complementary skill sets provide a strong competitive edge toward realizing this solution in the near future. The team’s commitment to diversity is evident in its current makeup (including advisors and partners), as well as in its long- and short-term plans for future recruitment,

²⁶ Avoid characterizing core innovations as proprietary and thus preventing independent evaluation by the expert reviewers. It is the intent of the Prize Administrator that, unless otherwise noted, no parts of the submitted materials be released to the public (see [Appendix 1](#) for more details).



	<p>collaboration, and other related internal diversity strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team identified skill gaps and brought in the right people or partners to fill those gaps.
--	---

Note: All Solar Prize competitors are encouraged to incorporate diversity and inclusion principles into their organization’s vision, mission, policies, and processes. Diversity of geographic locations where competitors innovate and build companies is also an important consideration for team diversity. Competitors who are located in or are building a presence in opportunity zones—economically distressed communities defined by census tract—are encouraged to highlight this.

Question 4: Plan – What is your plan to achieve your goals?	
<p style="text-align: center;">Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the goals submitted in the Ready! Contest submission package and describe the actual outcomes. Update goals for the Go! Demo Day and define goals for the next 180 and 365 days (see special instructions below), including how you will engage relevant stakeholders. • Describe your team’s readiness to meet your goals and the need for additional talent and/or resources. • Describe the specific functional improvements your prototype will demonstrate at the next Demo Day. • Provide a high-level budget plan to meet your goals for the next 180 days, including how you will leverage program resources—specifically the voucher funds, members of the American-Made Network, or other entities. • Describe risks to the development plan and mitigation strategies (e.g., certification timelines or dependence on third parties). • Explain why winning the Set! Contest will substantively change the likelihood of your success. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The competitors are successfully meeting prior goals and demonstrating continued critical progress toward testing and validating the functionality and market demand of this innovation. • Stated Go! Contest Demo Day goals and 180- and 365-day goals are ambitious and risk-reducing, and they show a commitment to an accelerated solution development cycle. • The competitors’ approach to completing their proposed plan is well-reasoned and makes good use of the program resources available to them (such as national laboratories and the American-Made Network). • Sufficient risks to the development plan have been identified, and reasonable risk mitigation strategies have been described. • Winning the Set! Contest significantly increases the team’s chances of creating a viable business based on this solution.



Reviewer Recommendation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no direct corresponding submission requirement for this score. Rather, it is an overall assessment of the total potential impact of the innovation compared to the team’s likelihood of success. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The submission demonstrates an impactful solution with a strong likelihood of success and should be strongly considered for a Set! Contest prize.

Special Instructions for Question 4

- Use only specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely (SMART) outcome-based goals, not activity-based goals, so that a neutral third party can validate them (if possible).
 - For example: Demonstrate a definitive achievement of progress (e.g., “X letters of interest signed” or “achieve Y% efficiency”); do **not** describe how you spent your time (e.g., “provide a report,” “talk to customers,” or “perform experiments”).
- SMART goals for the Go! Contest Demo Day should include demonstrating a functional prototype based on learning throughout the competition and at least one committed pilot test partner.
- In defining your SMART goals, include quantified, risk-reducing, meaningful, practical, and testable interim milestones.
- Members of the American-Made Network may be able to help you formulate your SMART goals.

JEDI Submission (Optional, Required for JEDI Contest Consideration) – 500 words max	
<p style="text-align: center;">Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe your organization’s unique value proposition(s) to underserved communities, how these propositions will lead to a sustainable business with paying customers, and how you validated your assumptions. Describe how your organization is integrating JEDI principles into your innovation. What makes your team uniquely capable of addressing issues of solar adoption in underserved communities? Report out on progress with respect to the Set! Contest JEDI goals and update your forward-looking JEDI goals for the Go! Demo Day, as well as the next 180 and 365 days. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The competitor is pursuing an innovative and compelling solution to expand solar access in underserved communities. The competitor quantifies a critical JEDI problem, and their assessment of current solutions shows a comprehensive understanding of the opportunity space. The team is uniquely capable of addressing issues of solar adoption in underserved communities. The competitor is successfully meeting prior JEDI goals, and the updated JEDI goals are SMART.
JEDI Contest Reviewer Recommendation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no direct corresponding submission requirement for the final JEDI Contest Reviewer Recommendation score. Rather, it 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This innovation, team, and plan should be



<p>is an overall assessment of the total potential impact of the JEDI submission compared to the team’s likelihood of success.</p>	<p>strongly considered for a JEDI Contest prize.</p>
--	--

Submission Summary Slide (a PowerPoint Slide as a PDF Will Be Made Public)

Make your own public-facing, one-slide submission summary that contains technically specific details but can be understood by most people. There is no template, so feel free to present the information as you see fit. Please make any text readable in a standard printout and conference room projection.

Voucher Work Slide (a PowerPoint Slide as a PDF)
Template²⁷: <https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8/resources>

Using the Voucher Work Slide template, describe how you would use voucher funds, including the entities you hope to engage and what they will do with the voucher funds. Use the Capabilities Guide to help you formulate these plans.

Letters of Commitment or Support (optional, as a PDF)

Submit one-page letters of support, intent, or commitment from relevant entities (e.g., potential users of the proposed innovation) to provide context. Letters of support from partners or others who are critical to the success of your proposed solution will likely increase your score. General letters of support from parties that are not critical to the execution of your solution will likely not factor into your score. Please do not submit multi-page letters.

Virtual Interview Day Event

You are required to participate in an Interview Day event with a panel of expert reviewers that will involve a closed-door Q&A session with reviewers and DOE. Reviewers review and score your submitted material before the Interview Day and then, based on your Interview Day performance and deliberation with the selection official, they will finalize their recommendations for winners on the Interview Day. At least one representative from each team must be present at the Interview Day for the team to be considered for a Set! prize.

**Please read and comply with the additional requirements about your submission in [Appendix 1](#).
 COMPETITORS WHO DO NOT COMPLY WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.**

²⁷ Use of the template is optional; however, all components listed here must be included in your document if you chose to create your own.



3.7 Scoring Process

The scoring of submissions will proceed as follows:

- A panel of expert reviewers reads, scores, and comments on each submission. The video submission and each section of the narrative questions receive a weighted score, based on the bulleted list of statements. The bullets guide the single overall score for each section. The final score from an individual reviewer for a submission package equals the total weighted sum of the scores for all the sections. All reviewers' scores are then averaged for a final reviewer score for the submission package. The selection official considers reviewer scores when deciding the winners.
 - Reviewers may not have personal or financial interests in, or be an employee, officer, director, or agent of, any entity that is a registered participant in this contest, or have a familial or financial relationship with an individual who is a registered competitor.

Note: Expert reviewers will also provide comments on the submissions they review. The Prize Administrator intends to provide comments to competitors after the winners are announced. These comments are intended to help competitors to continue to improve and iterate on their submissions. The comments are the opinions of the expert reviewers and do not represent the opinions of DOE.

- Interviews: The Prize Administrator, at its sole discretion, may decide to hold a short interview with a subset of the Set! Contest competitors. Interviews would be held prior to the announcement of winners and would serve to help clarify questions the selection official may have. Attending interviews is not required, and interviews are not an indication of winning.

3.8 Find Help

Find the Power Connectors subcontracted for Solar Prize Round 8 on <https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8>.

3.9 Additional Requirements

Please read and comply with the additional requirements in [Appendix 1](#).

COMPETITORS WHO DO NOT COMPLY WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.



4 Go! Contest Rules

4.1 Introduction

The Go! Contest is the third in the American-Made Solar Prize three-contest series, offering a total of \$1 million in cash prizes. Only winners of the Set! Contest can compete in the Go! Contest. These winners are referred to as Set! Contest winners or American-Made Solar Prize finalists. **The following guidelines are for competitors interested in the Go! Contest. “You” and “your” reference competitors in the contest.**

4.2 Goal

The goal of the Go! Contest period is focused on four key areas:

- **Prototype Development:** The completion of a prototype that incorporates lessons learned and feedback from potential users and that can be demonstrated in a video presentation and/or in person. For software solutions, the prototype should be a refined software product showing improvements beyond the minimum viable product.
- **Pilot Test Partnering or Paying Customers:** Demonstrate the commercial viability of the innovation through a committed partnership, which could be a committed pilot partner or secured credible customers, as evidenced by a legally binding agreement to conduct a pilot test or payment receipts.^{28, 29, 30}
- **Network Development:** The solidification of a core network of mentors and partners to work with to help advance the proposed solution. This network can include national labs, members of the American-Made Network, funders, and private partners.
- **Post-Contest Planning:** The development of a long-term plan for the ongoing success of the effort—specifically, a compelling case that there is, or will soon be, sufficient funding in place to keep the effort going beyond this prize contest.

Go! Contest Prizes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Up to two winners• \$1 million in total cash prizes and \$900,000 in total vouchers. Each winner receives a cash prize of \$500,000 and each eligible submitter (Set! winner) receives a \$90,000 voucher.• Optional JEDI Contest: \$50,000 in total cash prizes (see Section 1.4).

4.3 Prizes To Win

The Go! Contest offers two \$500,000 cash prizes. Additionally, any of the winners of the Set! Contest who are eligible and submit to the Go! Contest will be awarded a \$90,000 voucher at the conclusion of the

²⁸ Enforceability of the pilot test agreement between the competitor and the pilot test partner may be contingent on the competitor winning the Go! Contest.

²⁹ “Pilot test” is not rigidly defined. It is up to the Go! competitors to produce the most compelling submission possible to show a real-world test of the proposed solution with a relevant third-party customer or user in need of the solution.

³⁰ Given the diversity of software solutions, there is flexibility in the number of paying customers needed to validate the business model. For example, a business-to-business software with utility customers may need only a small number of customers to prove its value, whereas a business-to-consumer software would need a much larger number of customers.



prize. Two thirds of voucher funds must be spent at a national laboratory, and the remaining third may be spent at a national laboratory or a private facility of the winners' choice. Winners will negotiate the scope of work to be performed under a voucher and can choose which national laboratory and/or private facility will perform the work. All voucher work must be completed within a year after the execution of agreements with the national labs, or a year after the winner announcement if a team elects to use a private facility. For additional information on how the voucher program will work, see: <https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8/resources>.

4.4 How To Enter

Complete a submission package online at <https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8/resources> before the contest closing date.

4.5 Go! Contest Process

The Go! Contest consists of five important steps:

1. **Progress and Submit** – Competitors work with the American-Made Network³¹ to advance their solutions as much as possible and identify pilot partners. Competitors then create their Go! Contest submission packages and submit them online before the Go! Contest Demo Day.
2. **Preliminary Review** – All completed submissions will be assigned to subject-matter expert reviewers. Reviewers will independently review and score each submission, then participate in the Demo Day event and provide feedback.
3. **Demo Day** – Competitors will participate in a Demo Day event with a panel of expert reviewers and members of the public. The details and agenda for the event will be provided 30 days in advance of the event.
4. **Selection** – The selection official will select two winners, considering the written submissions, the expert reviewer feedback, and performance at the Demo Day.
5. **Announcement** – As a part of the Demo Day, the Prize Administrator will announce winners. After receiving the Go! Contest prize, winners can develop their solutions in accordance with the plan submitted as a part of the Go! Contest.

4.6 What To Submit and Evaluation Criteria

A complete submission for the Go! Contest must include the following items:

Item	Content
Submission Package	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission form, including Connector Recognition Reward nominations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Required question in the submission form: Does your company have any other current or pending federal government support for this or related work?³² If so, please

³¹ The Prize Administrator has dedicated approximately \$260,000 to recognize members of the American-Made Network that help competitors advance through the contests.

³² Current and Pending Federal Support includes all financial support made available to a company in support of and/or related to all of its project efforts. Information must be provided about all current and pending federal government support, including ongoing projects and proposals currently under consideration.



	<p>specify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The name of the funding opportunity ▪ The proposed or awarded total project funds ▪ Federal funds requested or received. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6-minute pitch and technical demonstration video (public) • Cover page content • Narrative that answers four questions about the <i>problem and solution, innovation, team, and plan</i> (not to exceed 2,500 words) • JEDI Contest submission (optional but required for JEDI Contest consideration; not to exceed 500 words) • Summary PowerPoint slide (public) • Voucher Statement of Work • Legally binding commitment (mandatory) or support (optional).
Demo Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in Go! Demo Day event.

Note: Portions of the submission package are made available to the public. These have been denoted as such, and DOE does not intend to release the remaining parts of the submission to the public. See [Appendix 1](#) for additional details.

All documents other than the video must be uploaded as a PDF.

The following details provide more guidance on what information to provide and how expert reviewers and the selection official evaluate and score your submission. Expert Reviewers will evaluate your submission by assigning a single score for each scored submission section, based on their overall agreement or disagreement with a series of statements.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6

The score for each section will be weighted as follows:

Section	Weight
Pitch and Demo Video	25%
Narrative Question 1 - Problem and Solution	15%
Narrative Question 2 - Innovation	20%
Narrative Question 3 - Team	15%
Narrative Question 4 - Plan	20%
Reviewer Recommendation	5%

For competitors opting into the JEDI Contest, each JEDI criterion will be scored individually and will receive equal weighting.



Note: This submission package will be reviewed by solar industry and entrepreneurial professionals. Cumulatively, they have decades of experience assessing novel ideas and solutions. However, their background may not be in the specific problem you are solving. Transition quickly from general background into the details of your problem, solution, and plan.

Reminder: Nominate Connectors for a Recognition Reward!
Remember that you can incentivize Connectors to help by agreeing to identify them on your submission form to receive a cash reward. See the description of Recognition Rewards in [Section 1.6](#).

Pitch and Demo Video – 6-Minute Pitch on Your Innovation, Company, and Prototype Demonstration (public)
If you opted in for JEDI Contest consideration, add up to 1 minute to your pitch (7 minutes total).

Suggested content you provide	Evaluation criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the real-world problem you are solving. Describe your solution and why it is transformational compared to existing solutions. Explain the features of your prototype and how it works. Demonstrate its functionality or testing of its known possible failure modes. What progress has been made over the competition period? What is the scale of the opportunity, and what is your target market? Who are you, and why do you have a competitive edge? [Optional, for JEDI Contest consideration] Describe how your organization is integrating JEDI principles into your innovation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The video explains a compelling real-world problem and solution. The video demonstrates a prototype for an exciting innovation. The prototype has retired significant technical risk. Progress has been demonstrated during the competition period. The video identifies a reasonable target market and a path to making a significant impact on the U.S. solar industry. The video shows a knowledgeable and skillful team. [Optional, for JEDI Contest consideration, scored separately] The video describes a compelling solution to stated JEDI barrier(s), and the team has made progress toward their JEDI goals.

Post your publicly accessible video online (YouTube preferred). Please note that if the link to your video cannot be accessed by the Prize Administrators, your submission will be marked ineligible for missing materials.

Be creative and produce a video that conveys the required information in exciting and interesting ways, but do not focus on time-consuming activities that only improve production values (i.e., technical elements such as décor, lighting, and cinematic techniques). Assistance from others with experience in



this area may be helpful. Members of the American-Made Network may be able to help you create your video.

Cover Page – List Basic Information About Your Submission (required, but not scored)

Template³³: <https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8/resources>³⁴

- Project name
- Innovation tagline (e.g., your mission in a few words)
- Link to your online pitch video
- Key project members (names, contacts, and links to their LinkedIn profiles)
- Keywords that best describe your solution (e.g., agrivoltaics, microinverters, solar financing)
- Your city, state, and 9-digit zip code
- The partners, affiliates, and Connectors³⁵ that significantly helped you³⁶ advance your solution and the major items they helped with (if applicable)
- Whether you would like to compete in the JEDI Contest.

Reminder: Nominate Connectors for a Recognition Reward!

Remember that you can incentivize Connectors to help by agreeing to identify them in your submission to receive a cash reward for that help if you win the Go! Contest. See the description of Recognition Rewards in [Section 1.6](#).

You should answer each of the following four questions. The content bullets are only suggestions to guide your responses. You decide where to focus your answers. The individual answers to the four questions do not have a word limit; however, **the aggregate response to these four questions must not exceed 2,500 words**, not including captions, figures/graphs, and references. **A word count must be included** at the end of your submission (see template for details). You may also include **up to five supporting images, figures, or graphs**. The reviewers will score the questions based on the content you have provided.

Narrative (PDF)

Max 2,500 Words and Five Supporting Images or Figures

Template³⁷: <https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8/resources>

Question 1: Problem and Solution – What is the problem, and how are you solving it?

³³ Use of the template is optional; however, all components listed here must be included in your document if you chose to create your own.

³⁴ **Important:** Templates from the Set! Contest have been updated for Go!.

³⁵ See description of a Connector in [Section 1.6](#).

³⁶ Remember that you can incentivize Connectors to help by agreeing to identify them here (up to three) to receive a cash reward for that help, regardless of if you win the Go! Contest. See the description of Recognition Rewards in [Section 1.6](#) and the [Connector Guidelines](#) for details.

³⁷ Use of the template is optional; however, all components listed here must be included in your document if you chose to create your own. The provided template has been updated from the Set! Contest.



<p style="text-align: center;">Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the problem, specifically the problem space that your innovation addresses,³⁸ and why existing solutions are inadequate. • Describe your innovation and how it is superior to existing products or emerging solutions. Show how you know this using evidence-based validation (e.g., interviews with users and experts). • Describe your innovation’s unique value propositions and how these will lead to a sustainable business with paying customers. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The competitor quantifies a critical problem, and their assessment of current solutions shows a comprehensive understanding of the problem-solution space. • The solution represents an innovative approach built on reasonable assumptions, a valid technical foundation, and lessons learned from experience gained. • The competitor is pursuing an innovative and compelling solution, which will lead to a sustainable business with paying customers.
--	---

Question 2: Innovation – What progress have you made to prove your solution will be successful?

<p style="text-align: center;">Suggested content you provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the current state of development of your prototype, its technical specifications, and sufficient underlying details on how it works to facilitate external evaluation of the performance claims you make.³⁹ For software solutions, provide instructions on how to access and use the software. • Describe the progress made over the contest period and highlight key engagements, relationships, and milestones. • Describe how you have validated your technical performance assumptions. • Describe your business model, cost model, and potential price points. • Describe your committed partner(s), their interest in your solution, their level of commitment, and expected pilot testing or purchase agreement outcomes. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient technical detail was provided to understand the underlying principles of operation of the innovation. • The prototype is grounded in real-world assumptions and resolves critical technical risks. • A considerable amount of high-quality effort was put into building a prototype and advancing the innovation. • The assumptions around the business model and pricing are reasonable, achievable, and competitive. • The committed partner has the need for, and capability to, pilot test and potentially utilize this innovation. For software solutions, they have purchased and express interest in the solution.
---	--

³⁸ Avoid providing general background on the rapid growth of the solar industry or other high-level trends with which the reviewers are well versed.

³⁹ Avoid characterizing core innovations as proprietary and thus preventing independent evaluation by the expert reviewers. It is the intent of the Prize Administrator that, unless otherwise noted, no parts of the submitted materials be released to the public (see [Appendix 1](#) for more details).



Question 3: Team – What qualities give you a competitive edge, and how have you grown?

Suggested content you provide	Evaluation criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce your team and how it has evolved, highlighting the knowledge and skills that make the team uniquely capable of achieving success.• Discuss your team’s diversity and plans to build upon your team’s diversity in the future.• Describe how you identified your committed partner and discuss the rationale behind working with this partner versus others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The team’s drive, diversity, knowledge, and complementary skill sets provide a strong competitive edge toward realizing this solution in the near future.• The team’s commitment to diversity is evident in its current makeup (including advisors and partners), as well as in its long- and short-term plans for future recruitment, collaboration, and other related internal diversity strategies.• The committed partner is highly relevant to the identified path to market.

Note: All Solar Prize competitors are encouraged to incorporate diversity and inclusion principles into their organization’s vision, mission, policies, and processes. Diversity of geographic locations where competitors innovate and build companies is also an important consideration for team diversity. Competitors who are located in or are building a presence in opportunity zones—economically distressed communities defined by census tract—are encouraged to highlight this.

Question 4: Plan – What is your plan to achieve your goals?

Suggested content you provide	Evaluation criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide the previous contest goals and describe the actual outcomes. Define goals for the next 90, 180, and 365 days (see special instructions below), including how you will continue to engage relevant stakeholders.• Describe the discrete improvements to and functionality of the prototype you plan to implement over the next 90 to 180 days.• Describe the details of the committed partnership (strategy, timeline, outcomes, critical test, pilot test details, etc.).• Provide a high-level budget plan to meet your goals for the next 180 days, including how you will leverage program resources—specifically	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The competitors are successfully meeting prior goals and demonstrating continued critical progress toward testing and validating the functionality and market demand of this innovation.• Stated 90- and 180-day goals are ambitious and risk-reducing, and they show a commitment to an accelerated solution development cycle.• The approach to completing the planned committed partnership and advancing the innovation forward beyond this contest is well-reasoned and feasible.



<p>the voucher funds, members of the American-Made Network, or other entities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe risks to the development plan and mitigation strategies (e.g., certification timelines or dependence on third parties). • Explain why winning the Go! Contest will substantively change the likelihood of your success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The competitors' approach to completing their proposed plan is well-reasoned and makes good use of the program resources available to them (such as national laboratories and the American-Made Network). • Sufficient risks to the development plan have been identified, and reasonable risk mitigation strategies have been described. • Winning the Go! Contest significantly increases the team's chances of creating a viable business based on this solution.
--	--

Reviewer Recommendation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no direct corresponding submission requirement for this score. Rather, it is an overall assessment of the total potential impact of the innovation compared to the team's likelihood of success. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The submission demonstrates an impactful solution with a strong likelihood of success and should be strongly considered for a Go! Contest prize.

Special Instructions for Question 4

- Use only specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely (SMART) outcome-based goals, not activity-based goals, so that a neutral third party can validate them (if possible).
 - For example: Demonstrate a definitive achievement of progress (e.g., “X letters of interest signed” or “achieve Y% efficiency”); do **not** describe how you spent your time (e.g., “provide a report,” “talk to customers,” or “perform experiments”).
- SMART goals for the next 90 and 180 days should include demonstrating continued prototype refinement and an increasing number of customers.
- In defining your SMART goals, include quantified, risk-reducing, meaningful, practical, and testable interim milestones.
- Members of the American-Made Network may be able to help you formulate your SMART goals.

JEDI Submission (Optional, Required for JEDI Contest Consideration) – 500 words max



<p style="text-align: center;">Suggested content to provide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe your organization’s unique value proposition(s) to underserved communities, how these propositions will lead to a sustainable business with paying customers, and how you validated your assumptions. • Describe how your organization is integrating JEDI principles into your innovation. • What makes your team uniquely capable of addressing issues of solar adoption in underserved communities? • Report on progress with respect to your previously submitted Go! Contest JEDI goals, and update your forward-looking JEDI goals for the next 90, 180, and 365 days. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The competitor is pursuing an innovative and compelling solution to expand solar access in underserved communities. • The competitor quantifies a critical JEDI problem, and their assessment of current solutions shows a comprehensive understanding of the opportunity space. • The team is uniquely capable of addressing issues of solar adoption in underserved communities. • The competitor is successfully meeting prior JEDI goals, and the updated JEDI goals are SMART.
---	--

JEDI Contest Reviewer Recommendation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no direct corresponding submission requirement for the final JEDI Contest Reviewer Recommendation score. Rather, it is an overall assessment of the total potential impact of the JEDI submission compared to the team’s likelihood of success. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Evaluation criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This innovation, team, and plan should be strongly considered for a JEDI Contest prize.
--	---

Submission Summary Slide (a PowerPoint Slide as a PDF Will Be Made Public)

Make your own public-facing, one-slide submission summary that contains technically specific details but can be understood by most people. There is no template, so feel free to present the information as you see fit. Please make any text readable in a standard printout and conference room projection.

Voucher Statement of Work
Template⁴⁰: <https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8/resources>

Using the provided template, describe how you will use your voucher funds by listing tasks and deliverables, a budget breakdown, including the entities and researchers you matched with and what they will do with the voucher funds. Provide one Statement of Work per entity—national laboratory

⁴⁰ Use of the template is optional; however, all components listed here must be included in your document if you chose to create your own.



and/or private facility—that you plan to engage. Include a maximum of two Statement of Work documents and combine them into a single PDF.

Committed Partnership (Mandatory) or Support (Optional, as a PDF)

A committed partnership that demonstrates the commercial viability of the innovation is required and must be part of the submission package. A committed partnership for a hardware solution could be a signed contract, purchase order, or signed letter from a pilot partner with a guaranteed commitment to pilot test without contingencies. For a software solution, this could be evidence of credible customers in the form of executed customer agreements or payment receipts. The committed partnership must be from an entity that is not represented by a team member on the submission package or anyone that has personal, familial, or social ties to the competitor. The entities must also be U.S. based. Competitors should submit the strongest possible documentation to meet this requirement. DOE and NREL will not provide a preliminary review. A team will not be eligible to win the Go! Contest if this requirement is deemed unfulfilled.

Demo Day Event⁴¹

You are required to participate in a Demo Day event with a panel of reviewers that may involve a pitch, a closed-door Q&A session, and/or a technical demonstration. Reviewers review and score your submitted material before the Demo Day and then, based on your Demo Day performance and deliberation with the selection official, they will finalize their recommendations for winners on the Demo Day. At least one representative from each team must be present at the Demo Day for the team to be considered for a Go! prize.

Please read and comply with the additional requirements about your submission in [Appendix 1](#).

COMPETITORS WHO DO NOT COMPLY WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.

4.7 Scoring Process

The scoring of submissions will proceed as follows:

- A panel of expert reviewers reads, scores, and comments on each submission. The video submission and the narrative questions receive a weighted score, based on the bulleted list of statements. The final score from an individual reviewer for a submission package equals the total

⁴¹ This event is intended to be held in person. However, if circumstances require this event to be held virtually, the decision will be made and communicated to competitors in advance of the scheduled Demo Day date. If it is held in person, competitors will be required to organize their own travel and accommodations to participate in the Demo Day.



weighted sum of the scores for all the sections. All reviewers' scores are then averaged for a final reviewer score for the submission package. The selection official considers reviewer scores when deciding the winners of the prize.

- Reviewers may not have personal or financial interests in, or be an employee, officer, director, or agent of, any entity that is a registered participant in this contest, or have a familial or financial relationship with an individual who is a registered competitor.

Note: Expert reviewers will also provide comments on the submissions they review. The Prize Administrator intends to provide comments to competitors after the winners are announced. These comments are intended to help competitors to continue to improve and iterate on their submissions. The comments are the opinions of the expert reviewers and do not represent the opinions of DOE.

- Interviews: The Prize Administrator, at its sole discretion, may decide to hold a short interview with a subset of the Go! Contest competitors. Interviews would be held prior to the announcement of winners and would serve to help clarify questions the selection official may have. Attending interviews is not required, and interviews are not an indication of winning.
- The selection official's final determination of winners will take reviewer scores, team performance on the Demo Day, reviewer deliberation, interview findings (if applicable), and program policy factors listed in [Appendix 1](#) into account. DOE is the judge, selection official, and final decision maker and may elect to award all, none, or some of the submissions accepted at each submission deadline.

4.8 Find Help

Find the Power Connectors subcontracted on Solar Prize Round 8 on <https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8>.

4.9 Additional Requirements

Please read and comply with the additional requirements in [Appendix 1](#).

COMPETITORS WHO DO NOT COMPLY WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS MAY BE DISQUALIFIED.



Appendix 1: Additional Terms and Conditions

A.1 Universal Contest Requirements

Your submission for the Ready!, Set!, and Go! Contests is subject to following terms and conditions:

- If any team member is actively receiving funding from SETO at the Ready! submission deadline, SETO will review any potential prize awards, as well as other DOE funding, and make a decision as to whether awarding a prize to individuals or entities already receiving funding is in line with the program policy factors ([Section A.14](#)).
- Competitors who won any contest in a previous round of the American-Made Solar Prize are discouraged from submitting the same or similar idea to a future round of the prize.
- You must post the final content of your submission or upload the submission form online at <https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8> before the Ready!, Set!, and Go! Contests close. Late submissions or any other form of submission do not qualify.
- The video submission and summary slide will be made public.
- The cover page, narrative, and letters of commitment/support are not intended to be made public; however, see [Section A.11](#) regarding the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).
- You agree to release your submission video under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).
- You must include all the required submission elements. The Prize Administrator may disqualify your submission after an initial screening if you fail to provide all required submission elements. Competitors may be given an opportunity to rectify submission errors due to technical challenges.
- Your submission must be in English and in a readable and searchable PDF format. Scanned handwritten submissions will be disqualified.
- Competitors will be disqualified if, during any engagement with the Solar Prize, including but not limited to the submission, the online forum, emails to the Prize Administrator, or other forms of communication, they convey any matter that, in the discretion of DOE, is indecent, lacking in professionalism, or demonstrates a lack of respect for people or life on this planet.
- If you click "Accept" on the HeroX platform and proceed to register for any of the contests described in this document, these rules will form a valid and binding agreement between you and DOE, in addition to the existing HeroX Terms of Use, for all purposes relating to these contests. You should print and keep a copy of these rules. These provisions only apply to the contests described here and no other contests on the HeroX platform or anywhere else.
- The Prize Administrator, when feasible, may give competitors an opportunity to fix nonsubstantive mistakes or errors in their submission packages.

A.2 Voucher Pairing System

The Prize Administrator will coordinate with the other DOE national laboratories and cultivate relationships with private fabrication facilities that are willing to work with competitors. Ready! and Set! Contest winners will then include their planned use of voucher funds as part of the Set! and Go! Contest submissions. Winners of the Set! and Go! Contests will then be able to negotiate specifics with either their laboratory partner or a private facility and quickly begin voucher work.



Although winners can choose where they spend their voucher funding, two-thirds of voucher funds must be spent at a national laboratory, and the remaining third may be spent at a national laboratory or a private facility of the winners' choice. In the case of a national laboratory, the funds will be provided directly to the laboratory on behalf of the winners to conduct a mutually agreed upon scope of work between the laboratory and the winners. When vouchers are used at a non-national-laboratory facility, the winners will be reimbursed after the voucher work is complete. Voucher funds may not be redeemed for cash or transferred.

Further details about the voucher process are provided at the vouchers website:
<https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8/resources>.

A.3 Verification for Payments

The Prize Administrator will verify the identity and the role of a participant potentially qualified to receive the prizes. Receiving a prize payment is contingent upon fulfilling all requirements contained herein. The Prize Administrator will notify winning competitors using provided email contact information after the date that the results are announced. Each competitor (or parent/guardian if under 18 years of age) will be required to sign and return to the Prize Administrator, within 30 days of the date the notice is sent, a Prize Acceptance Form, a completed National Renewable Energy Laboratory Request for ACH Banking Information form, and a completed W9 form (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>). At the sole discretion of the Prize Administrator, a winning competitor will be disqualified from the competition and receive no prize funds if: (i) the person/entity cannot be contacted; (ii) the person/entity fails to sign and return the required documentation within the required time period; (iii) the notification is returned as undeliverable; or (iv) the submission or person/entity is disqualified for any other reason.

In the event of a dispute as to any registration, the authorized account holder of the email address used to register will be deemed to be the competitor. The "authorized account holder" is the natural person or legal entity assigned an email address by an internet access provider, online service provider, or other organization responsible for assigning email addresses for the domain associated with the submitted address. All competitors may be required to show proof of being the authorized account holder.

A.4 Teams and Single-Entity Awards

The Prize Administrator will award a single dollar amount to the designated primary submitter, listed on the HeroX submission form, whether the submitter consists of a single or multiple entities. The primary submitter is solely responsible for allocating any prize funds among its member competitors as they deem appropriate. The Prize Administrator will not arbitrate, intervene, advise on, or resolve any matters or disputes between team members or competitors.

A.5 Submission Rights

The public videos in this contest must be submitted and released to the public under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

By making a submission and consenting to the rules of the contest, a competitor is granting to DOE, the Prize Administrator, and any other third parties supporting DOE in the contest, a license to display publicly and use the parts of the submission that are designated as "public" for government purposes. This license includes posting or linking to the public portions of the submission on the Prize Administrator's or HeroX's applications, on the contest website, on DOE websites, and on partner websites, and the inclusion of the submission in any other media worldwide. The submission may be viewed by DOE, the Prize Administrator, and expert reviewers for purposes of the contests, including but not limited to



screening and evaluation purposes. The Prize Administrator and any third parties acting on their behalf will also have the right to publicize the competitors' names and, as applicable, the names of competitors' team members and organizations that participated in the submission, on the contest website indefinitely.

By entering, the Competitor represents and warrants that:

The competitor's entire submission is an original work by the competitor, and the competitor has not included third-party content (e.g., writing, text, graphics, artwork, logos, photographs, likenesses of any third party, musical recordings, clips of videos, television programs, or motion pictures) in or in connection with the submission, unless (i) otherwise requested by the Prize Administrator and/or disclosed by the competitor in the submission, and (ii) the competitor has either obtained the rights to use such third-party content, or the content of the submission is considered in the public domain without any limitations on use.

Unless otherwise disclosed in the submission, the use thereof by the Prize Administrator, or the exercise by the Prize Administrator of any of the rights granted by the competitor under these rules, does not and will not infringe or violate any rights of any third party or entity, including, without limitation, patent, copyright, trademark, trade secret, defamation, privacy, publicity, false light, misappropriation, intentional or negligent infliction of emotional distress, confidentiality, or any contractual or other rights.

All persons who were engaged by the competitor to work on the submission or who appear in the submission in any manner have:

Given the competitor their express written consent to submit the submission for exhibition and other exploitation in any manner and in any and all media, whether now existing or hereafter discovered, throughout the world.

Provided written permission to include their name, image, or pictures in or with the submission (or, if a minor who is not the competitor's child, the competitor must have the permission of the minor's parent or legal guardian), and the competitor may be asked by the Prize Administrator to provide permission in writing.

Not been and are not currently under any union or guild agreement that results in any ongoing obligations resulting from the use, exhibition, or other exploitation of the submission.

A.6 Copyright

Each competitor represents and warrants that the competitor is the sole author and copyright owner of the submission; that the submission is an original work of the applicant, or that the applicant has acquired sufficient rights to use and to authorize others, including DOE, to use the submission, as specified throughout the rules; that the submission does not infringe upon any copyright or upon any other third-party rights of which the applicant is aware; and that the submission is free of malware.

A.7 Contest Subject to Applicable Law

All contests are subject to all applicable federal laws and regulations. Participation constitutes each participant's full and unconditional agreement to these Official Contest Rules and administrative decisions, which are final and binding in all matters related to the contest. This notice is not an obligation of funds; the final awards are contingent upon the availability of appropriations.



A.8 Resolution of Disputes

DOE is solely responsible for administrative decisions, which are final and binding in all matters related to the contest.

In the event of a dispute, the authorized account holder of the email address used to register will be deemed to be the competitor. The "authorized account holder" is the natural person or legal entity assigned an email address by an internet access provider, online service provider, or other organization responsible for assigning email addresses for the domain associated with the submitted address. Competitors and potential winners may be required to show proof of being the authorized account holder.

The Prize Administrator will not arbitrate, intervene, advise on, or resolve any matters between team members or any disputes between teams.

A.9 Publicity

The winners of these prizes (collectively, "winners") will be featured on DOE and NREL websites.

Except where prohibited, participation in the contest constitutes each winner's consent to DOE's and its agents' use of each winner's name, likeness, photograph, voice, opinions, and/or hometown and state information for promotional purposes through any form of media worldwide, without further permission, payment, or consideration.

A.10 Liability

Upon registration, all participants agree to assume and, thereby, have assumed any and all risks of injury or loss in connection with or in any way arising from participation in this contest or development of any submission. Upon registration, except in the case of willful misconduct, all participants agree to and, thereby, do waive and release any and all claims or causes of action against the federal government and its officers, employees, and agents for any and all injury and damage of any nature whatsoever (whether existing or thereafter arising; whether direct, indirect, or consequential; and whether foreseeable or not) arising from their participation in the contest, whether the claim or cause of action arises under contract or tort.

In accordance with the delegation of authority to run this contest delegated to the Director of SETO, the Director has determined that no liability insurance will be required of competitors to compete in this competition, per 15 USC 3719(i)(2). Competitors should assess the risks associated with their proposed activities and adequately insure themselves against possible losses.

A.11 Records of Retention and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

All materials submitted to DOE as part of a submission become DOE records and are subject to the Freedom of Information Act. The following applies only to portions of the submission not designated as public information in the instructions for submission. If a submission includes trade secrets or information that is commercial or financial, or information that is confidential or privileged, it is furnished to the government in confidence with the understanding that the information shall be used or disclosed only for evaluation of the application. Such information will be withheld from public disclosure to the extent permitted by law, including the Freedom of Information Act. Without assuming any liability for inadvertent disclosure, DOE will seek to limit disclosure of such information to its employees and to outside reviewers when necessary for review of the application or as otherwise authorized by



law. This restriction does not limit the government’s right to use the information if it is obtained from another source.

Submissions containing confidential, proprietary, or privileged information must be marked as described below. Failure to comply with these marking requirements may result in the disclosure of the unmarked information under the Freedom of Information Act or otherwise. The U.S. government is not liable for the disclosure or use of unmarked information and may use or disclose such information for any purpose.

The submission must be marked as follows, identifying the specific pages containing trade secrets, confidential, proprietary, or privileged information: “Notice of Restriction on Disclosure and Use of Data: Pages [list applicable pages] of this document may contain trade secrets, confidential, proprietary, or privileged information that is exempt from public disclosure. Such information shall be used or disclosed only for evaluation purposes. [End of Notice]”

The header and footer of every page that contains confidential, proprietary, or privileged information must be marked as “Contains Trade Secrets, Confidential, Proprietary, or Privileged Information Exempt from Public Disclosure.” In addition, each line or paragraph containing proprietary, privileged, or trade secret information must be clearly marked with double brackets.

Competitors will be notified of any Freedom of Information Act requests for their submissions in accordance with 29 C.F.R. §70.26. Competitors may then have the opportunity to review materials and work with a Freedom of Information Act representative before the release of materials. DOE does intend to keep all submission materials private except materials designated as “will be made public.”

A.12 Privacy

If you choose to provide HeroX with personal information by registering or completing the submission package through the contest website, you understand that such information will be transmitted to DOE and may be kept in a system of records. Such information will be used only to respond to you in matters regarding your submission and/or the contest, unless you choose to receive updates or notifications about other contests or programs from DOE on an opt-in basis. DOE and NREL are not collecting any information for commercial marketing.

A.13 General Conditions

DOE reserves the right to cancel, suspend, and/or modify the contest, or any part of it, at any time. If any fraud, technical failures, or any other factors beyond DOE’s reasonable control impairs the integrity or proper functioning of the prize, as determined by DOE in its sole discretion, DOE may cancel the prize. Any performance toward prize goals is conducted entirely at the risk of the competitor, and DOE shall not compensate any competitors for any activities performed in furtherance of this prize.

DOE may conduct a risk review, using Government resources, of the competitor and project personnel for potential risks of foreign interference. The outcomes of the risk review may result in the submission being eliminated from the prize competition. This risk review, and potential elimination, can occur at any time during the prize competition. An elimination based on a risk review is not appealable.

Although DOE indicates in the Ready!, Set!, and Go! Contests that it will select up to several winners for each contest, DOE reserves the right to only select competitors that are likely to achieve the goals of the program. If, in DOE’s determination, no competitors are likely to achieve the goals of the program, DOE will select no competitors to be winners and will award no prize money.



A.14 Program Policy Factors

While the scores of the expert reviewers will be carefully considered, it is the role of the Prize Administrator to maximize the impact of contest funds. Some factors outside the control of competitors and beyond the independent expert reviewer scope of review may need to be considered to accomplish this goal. The following is a list of such factors. In addition to the reviewers' scores, the below program policy factors may be considered in determining winners:

- Geographic diversity and potential economic impact of projects in a variety of solar markets
- Whether the use of additional DOE funds and provided resources continues to be nonduplicative and compatible with the stated goals of this program and DOE's mission generally
- The degree to which the submission exhibits technological or programmatic diversity when compared to the existing DOE project portfolio and other competitors
- The level of industry involvement and demonstrated ability to accelerate commercialization and overcome key market barriers
- The degree to which the submission is likely to lead to increased employment and manufacturing in the United States or provide other economic benefit to U.S. taxpayers
- The degree to which the submission will accelerate transformational technological, financial, or workforce advances in areas that industry by itself is not likely to undertake because of technical or financial uncertainty
- The degree to which the submission supports complementary DOE efforts or projects, which, when taken together, will best achieve the research goals and objectives
- The degree to which the submission expands DOE's funding to new competitors and recipients that have not been supported by DOE in the past
- The degree to which the submission exhibits team member diversity and the inclusion of underrepresented groups, with participants including but not limited to graduates and students of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and other minority-serving institutions (MSIs), or members operating within HUBZones,⁴² Justice 40 disadvantaged communities, and other underserved communities.
- The degree to which the submission enables new and expanding market segments
- Whether the project promotes increased coordination with nongovernmental entities for the demonstration of technologies and research applications to facilitate technology transfer.

A.15 National Environmental Policy Act Compliance

This prize is subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. § 4321, et seq.). NEPA requires federal agencies to integrate environmental values into their decision-making processes by considering the potential environmental impacts of their proposed actions. For additional background on NEPA, see DOE's NEPA website at <http://nepa.energy.gov/>.

⁴² A [historically underutilized business zone \(HUBZone\)](#) is an economically distressed area as determined by the Small Business Administration (SBA), based on income and unemployment data.



Though NEPA compliance is a federal agency responsibility, and the ultimate decisions remain with the federal agency, all participants in the Solar Prize will be required to assist in the timely and effective completion of the NEPA process in the manner most pertinent to their participation in the prize competition. Participants may be asked to provide DOE with information on fabrication and testing of their concept such that DOE can conduct a meaningful evaluation of the potential environmental impacts.

A.16 Definitions

Prize Administrator means both the Alliance for Sustainable Energy, operating in its capacity under the Management and Operating Contract for NREL, and SETO. When the Prize Administrator is referenced in this document, it refers to staff from both the Alliance for Sustainable Energy and SETO staff. Ultimate decision-making authority regarding contest matters rests with the Director of SETO.

Connector or Connector Organization means an entity that seeks to support the efforts of the competitors. These must be U.S.-based organizations that have the capacity to connect competitors to mentoring, business resources, and/or manufacturing resources, or introduce them to possible sources of funding. This definition is intentionally broad so that many different types of entities are able to participate. Connectors will be earning Recognition Rewards based on their support of competitors. Further details can be found at: <https://americanmadechallenges.org/network>.

Power Connectors are a subset of Connectors that receive contracts from the Alliance for Sustainable Energy to play a more substantial role in the competition and receive funds to expand and amplify the American-Made Challenges Solar Prize. Not only will these stakeholders work to identify talent and support participants in the Ready!, Set!, and Go! Contests, but they will also partner with NREL to envision and execute a long-term sustainable strategy for scaling the American-Made Challenges.

Voucher Funding – Vouchers are part of the prizes for eligible Set! finalists who submit for the Go! Contest. In the case of a national laboratory, the funds will be provided directly to the laboratory on behalf of the winner to conduct a mutually agreed upon scope of work between the laboratory and the winner. When vouchers are used at a non-national-laboratory facility, the winners will be reimbursed after the voucher work is complete. For further information, please see: <https://www.herox.com/solarprizeround8/resources>.

A.17 Return of Funds

As a condition of receiving a prize, competitors agree that if the prize was made based on fraudulent or inaccurate information provided by the competitor to DOE, DOE has the right to demand that any prize funds or the value of other noncash awards be returned to the government.

ALL DECISIONS BY DOE ARE FINAL AND BINDING IN ALL MATTERS RELATED TO THE CONTEST.

This is the end of the Rules Document. Thank you for reading.

