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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

## **American-Made Solar Prize Round 3**

# **GUIDELINES FOR CONNECTOR RECOGNITION REWARDS**

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The American-Made Solar Prize (Solar Prize) is designed to strengthen and scale critical connections that accelerate and sustain American innovation through two interrelated tracks. The program consists of a three-stage prize competition and the development of the American-Made Network.

The Solar Prize will spur innovation through a series of three progressive competitions that will incentivize the nation's innovators and entrepreneurs to rapidly discover, research, iterate, and deliver new solutions that will expand solar manufacturing in the United States. This approach to rapid product development not only provides cash prizes, but also activates America's energy incubators, investors, universities, national laboratories, and others to help participants achieve their goals. This approach is designed to be flexible, scalable, and to include diverse resources extending beyond solar to other technology domains and sectors. This will simultaneously enable the rapid development of technology while building connections that support commercialization.

## 2. CONNECTORS

Connectors are the core component of the American-Made Network and are organizations that seek to support the efforts of competitors in the Solar Prize. Connectors must be U.S.-based organizations (not individuals) that have the capacity to connect competitors to mentoring, business resources, manufacturing resources, or introduce them to possible sources of funding. Connectors that are successful in helping competitors win any of the Solar Prize Contests will earn Recognition Rewards. Connectors can be incubators, universities, think tanks, industry groups or any U.S.-based organization that provides support activities such as:

- Helping competitors refine their innovations, develop business plans, work with mentors, and connect them with investors and industry partners;
- Assisting competitors in the preparation of their Submission Packages to the Prize Contests;
- Raising non-federal 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 development, prototyping, validation, testing or manufacturing tools, facilities, and expertise.

Connectors who support participants that go on to win any of the Ready!, Set!, or Go! Contests earn payments outlined in the table below. Entities interested in participating as a Connector can visit the following site to sign up and apply: <https://americanmadechallenges.org/connect.html>.

Power Connectors are not eligible for Recognition payments.

**Connector Recognition Reward Opportunities:**

Recognition Reward Name	Anticipated Number of Awards	Dollar Amounts	Details
<b>Engage</b>	Up to 25	\$25,000 pool	Distributed to Connectors that engage with potential participants through targeted outreach and events leading up to the Ready! Contest submission deadline. Individual \$1,000 payments will be distributed to Connectors that host events that meet the event requirements below.
<b>Mobilize</b>	Up to 3 per team and 20 teams	\$100,000 pool	Distributed to Connectors that recruit and support competitors that go on to win the Ready! Contest.
<b>Mentor</b>	Up to 3 per team and 10 teams for Set!	\$50,000 pool	Distributed to Connectors that are identified as significant supporters by competitors that win the Set! Contest.
	Up to 3 per team and 2 teams for Go!	\$20,000 pool	Distributed to Connectors that are identified as significant supporters by competitors that win the Go! Contest.

**Engage** – The Engage Recognition Rewards will be paid to the Connectors that increase engagement for the Solar Prize through targeted outreach and events leading up to the Ready! Contest. Connectors can begin engaging with the community via local events, meet-ups, or other public events that are geared toward inspiring the public, generating ideas, and increasing community excitement and participation in the Solar Prize. Connectors are encouraged to host as many events as they see fit to mobilize all relevant talents and resources in their network. However, a Connector may only receive a payment for a single event. To receive a \$1,000 payment, a Connector must hold an event that meets or exceeds the following conditions:

- Host must be a Connector listed on the program website. To be listed, fill out the application form at <https://americanmadechallenges.org/connect.html> by clicking on the “I am ready to connect” button.
- The event is free and open to the public and held at a physical location in the United States.
- The event must be held at least 1 week before the Ready Contest submission Deadline
- The event is publicly advertised, widely shared/promoted, and posted as a new topic in the Solar Prize HeroX forum (<https://www.herox.com/SolarPrize/forum>).
- At least 30 people must physically attend the event. The 30 people counted must not be the employees of the Connector organization and cannot be paid by the Connector organization, as evidenced by a sign-in sheet.

- The Solar Prize is a focus of the event, as evidenced by the host giving a presentation on the Solar Prize which may utilize DOE-provided content or content created by the Connector. The host also must display Solar Prize video, (<https://americanmadechallenges.org/solarprize.html#>) during the event.
- The host must notify the prize administrator of the date and location of the event two weeks in advance of the event at [challenge@nrel.gov](mailto:challenge@nrel.gov) with SOLAR PRIZE ENGAGE EVENT in the subject line and provided call-in information so that a prize administration staff may attend or listen in.
- The event must be one of the first three events for the American-Made Solar Prize held in any particular state. NREL will evaluate evidence of events as they arrive at [challenge@nrel.gov](mailto:challenge@nrel.gov). The first three hosts that submit sufficient evidence of events that meet the event requirements will receive a recognition reward. Events will be considered in the order that evidence of the events is received at [challenge@nrel.gov](mailto:challenge@nrel.gov) regardless of the calendar date that the event occurred.
- The host must email evidence of the event to [challenge@nrel.gov](mailto:challenge@nrel.gov) with EVENT EVIDENCE in the subject line. Examples of possible evidence of event planning and execution may include the following:
  - Eventbrite or other similar webpage with corresponding list of registrants.
  - Copies of social media posts
  - Copies of email blasts/event reminders.
  - Pictures or videos of events posted online.
  - A blog post summary of the event, themes, and ideas discussed or testimonials.

For Connectors that do not have a physical presence or ability to host an in-person event (i.e. virtual network groups), the Prize Administrator may consider awarding an Engage payment for an online event. The event must meet the following criteria:

- Host must contact the Prize Administrator prior to the event for approval that it qualifies for payment. The host must notify the prize administrator of the date and location of the event two weeks in advance of the event at [challenge@nrel.gov](mailto:challenge@nrel.gov) with SOLAR PRIZE ENGAGE EVENT in the subject line and provided call-in information so that a prize administration staff may attend or listen in.
- Host must be a Connector listed on the program website. To be listed, fill out the application form at <https://americanmadechallenges.org/connect.html> by clicking on the “I am ready to connect” button.
- The event is free and open to the public.

- The event must be held at least 1 week before the Ready Contest submission Deadline
- The event is publicly advertised, widely shared/promoted, and posted as a new topic in the Solar Prize HeroX forum (<https://www.herox.com/SolarPrize/forum>).
- At least 100 people must virtually attend the event. The 100 people counted must not be the employees of the Connector organization and cannot be paid by the Connector organization, as evidenced by a sign-in sheet.
- The Solar Prize is a focus of the event, as evidenced by the host giving a presentation on the Solar Prize which may utilize DOE-provided content or content created by the Connector. The host also must display Solar Prize video, (<https://americanmadechallenges.org/solarprize.html#>) during the event.
- The first five virtual events that meet the criteria and provide evidence will be awarded the Engage payment. If any of the \$25,000 Engage payment pool is still available after the in-person events have been accounted for, additional virtual events beyond the first five may be considered for funding. NREL will evaluate evidence of events as they arrive at [challenge@nrel.gov](mailto:challenge@nrel.gov).
- The host must email evidence of the event to [challenge@nrel.gov](mailto:challenge@nrel.gov) with EVENT EVIDENCE in the subject line. The submitted evidence should include a recording of the virtual session in addition to any of the following:
  - Eventbrite or other similar webpage with corresponding list of registrants.
  - Copies of social media posts
  - Copies of email blasts/event reminders.
  - Pictures or videos of events posted online.
  - A blog post summary of the event, themes, and ideas discussed or testimonials.

**Mobilize and Mentor** – Connectors who significantly help a team during the Ready! Contest may receive Mobilize and Mentor Recognition Rewards if the following conditions are met:

The Connector must be on the list of approved Connectors on the American-Made Solar Prize website.

- To receive payment, the Connector must be listed in a winning competitor’s submission package for the Ready!, Set!, or Go! Contests as a supporting organization.

It is the expectation of the Prize Administrator that competitors will identify Connectors that have significantly helped them win a contest. Such assistance may include mentoring, coaching, crafting

their submission package, identifying SMART goals, exploring vouchers opportunities and introductions to investors, partners, researchers, experts or potential customers.

Connectors may receive a maximum of \$5,000 for helping a Ready! competitor win the Ready! Contest, and up to \$10,000 for helping a competitor win the Set! or Go! Contests. Connectors may help multiple teams win and receive multiple Recognition Rewards.

As winning competitors may divide the Recognition Rewards among up to three connectors for each Contest, the total amount a Connector may receive if a team they helped win may be less than the totals listed above. Teams will indicate to the NREL Prize administrator how the designated funds should be split among up to three Connectors, with a minimum payment of \$500 per Connector).After winning the contest, teams will be contacted by the Prize Administrator to confirm the Connectors listed in the submission and desired payment split if multiple Connectors are listed.

If no Connector mentored a winning competitor in an impactful way, there is no obligation for a competitor to identify a Connector. A competitor should identify a Connector only if a Connector helped them win the contest. If a competitor does not designate a connector, no recognition rewards will be disbursed. Power Connectors are ineligible to receive Mobilize and Mentor payments, even if a winning team lists them on their submission.