



INTERSTATE RENEWABLE ENERGY COUNCIL

2020 ANNUAL REPORT





MISSION STATEMENT

IREC builds the foundation for rapid adoption of clean energy and energy efficiency to benefit people, the economy, and our planet.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



2020 was a year of many challenges, from the loss of life, jobs, and normalcy as a result of the global COVID-19 pandemic to the exposure of major

disruptions to the electrical grid.

Yet, as I look back on IREC's work in 2020, and forward to what lies ahead, I am heartened by the impact we have had and energized by the opportunities in front of us. In 2020, as we have done for nearly 40 years, IREC helped build the foundation for rapid adoption of clean energy and energy efficiency by tackling regulatory, workforce, and economic barriers—playing a unique role as an independent nonprofit trusted for its technical expertise. And the future of our work is brighter than ever. A new presidential administration committed to action on climate change and clean energy, and the accelerating growth of clean energy industries, present new opportunities across the country.

Internally, IREC also welcomes several notable developments. In 2021, IREC will join forces with The Solar Foundation, doubling in size as we integrate their accomplished staff and acclaimed programs. Meanwhile, the merged organization will benefit from IREC's largest unrestricted donation to date, 1.2MW solar PV system donated by The Conti Group.

I invite you to learn more about these developments and explore the 2020 accomplishments of IREC, and The Solar Foundation, in the pages ahead.

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Larry Sherwood, IREC President & CEO

Vision Statement: A 100% clean energy future that is reliable, resilient and equitable.



The Solar Foundation and IREC to Unite With Expanded Impact

In November of 2020, IREC and The Solar Foundation announced an agreement to merge into a single, expanded nonprofit dedicated to the rapid adoption of clean energy.

The merger will combine the strengths of our two renowned national clean energy organizations, effectively doubling our staff and quadrupling our impact. **The Solar Foundation** is the leading national nonprofit dedicated to accelerating the adoption of solar energy and related technologies and, since its relaunch in 2010, has had a remarkable ten-year track record of leading cutting-edge research, education, and capacity-building programs. When the merger is completed in 2021, all of The Solar Foundation's programs will be combined at IREC.

Like IREC, The Solar Foundation has a reputation for deep, unbiased expertise on the benefits and economic impacts of clean energy, and on the drivers of clean energy market growth. Both of our organizations lead robust workforce development programs with an emphasis on diversity, inclusion, and equity in the clean energy fields. Both are also deeply engaged with state and local governments to help streamline codes and permitting requirements and remove barriers to clean energy development.

In addition to increased impact, longstanding mutual respect between IREC and The Solar Foundation and natural synergy between the organizations' programs were key considerations in the decision to merge.



COMBINED STRATEGIC PATHWAYS

The combined organization's scope will drive change via the three strategic pathways highlighted in this report: **Regulatory Engagement**, **Workforce Development**, and **Local Initiatives**. All programs of both organizations will continue operating and IREC will maintain offices in Washington, D.C. and Albany, New York.



Since 1982, IREC has been paving the way for accelerated growth of clean energy and more inclusive access to clean energy benefits. We are thrilled to join forces with The Solar Foundation and welcome a new chapter in our organization's history—one that enables dramatically increased impact at a time when progress on clean energy has never been more important.

- Larry Sherwood, IREC President & CEO



STRATEGIC PATHWAYS

PROVIDE STATE REGULATORY REFORM AND ADOPTION OF POLICY BEST PRACTICES

IREC intervenes and provides technical assistance in states and territories to improve the rules, regulatory policies, and technical standards to enable the streamlined, efficient, and cost-effective installation of clean, distributed energy resources and enable the decarbonization of the transportation and building sectors.





INCREASE CLEAN ENERGY WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND DIVERSITY

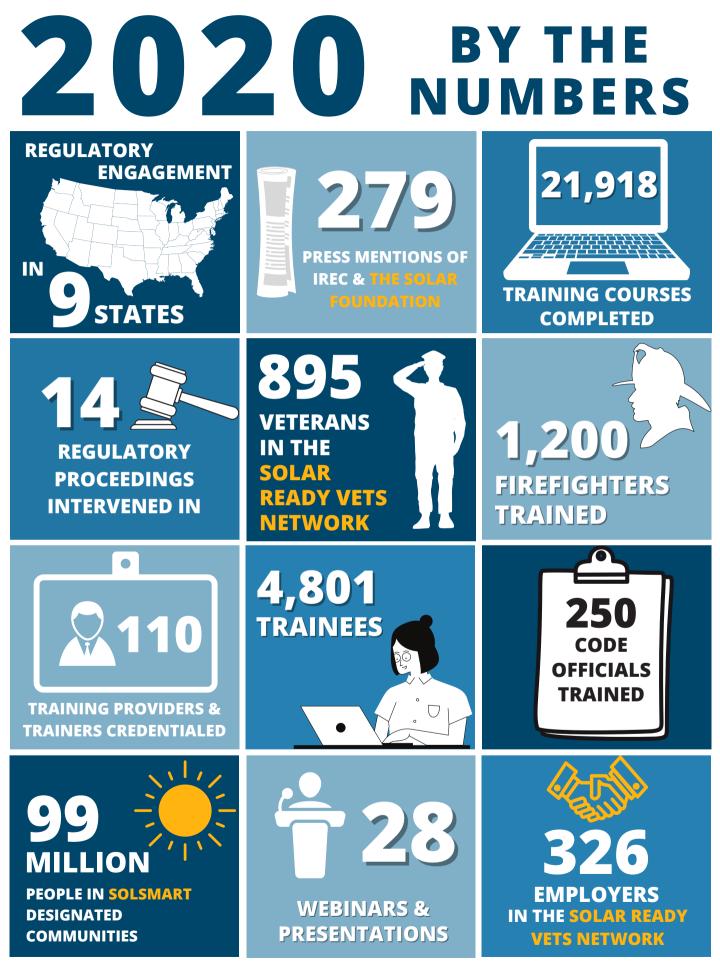
IREC provides strategy and direction to help those working toward clean energy goals foster a growing and equitable clean energy workforce.

GUIDE LOCAL INITIATIVES

IREC informs, guides, incentivizes, and supports local governments, communities, and individuals to take actions that increase the deployment of clean energy and implementation of energy efficiency.





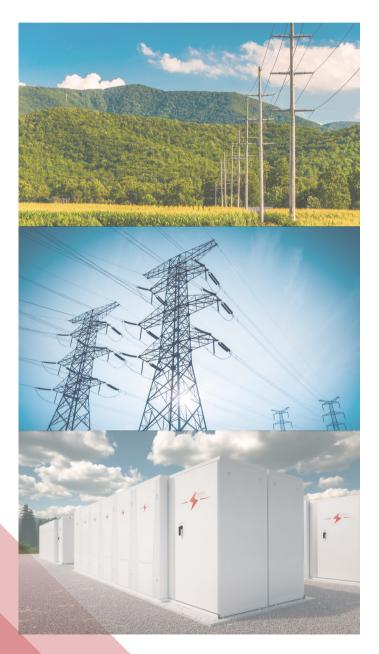




State Regulatory Reform and Adoption of Policy Best Practices

IREC's **Regulatory Program** facilitates the adoption of policies and regulatory reforms in states around the country that allow more communities to benefit from renewable, clean energy, including low- to moderate-income consumers and disadvantaged communities.

IREC's involvement in regulatory proceedings in nearly every state has led to consensus-based, viable solutions that enable higher penetrations of distributed energy resources and streamline the process of connecting clean energy to the grid. IREC coordinates closely with diverse local and regional stakeholders and provides independent, fact-based policy leadership informed by our multi-state engagement and national perspective.





"The IREC team is exceptional. Obviously, the team members are the foremost experts on interconnection, but their expertise goes far beyond just interconnection. For example, IREC's GridMod Playbook is an excellent tool for regulators; a tool that should help advance Grid Mod across the country. I have had the pleasure of working with the IREC team in multiple capacities over the last decade, and they always bring thoughtful and insightful knowledge to the conversation."

—Nathan Phelps, Regulatory Director, Vote Solar

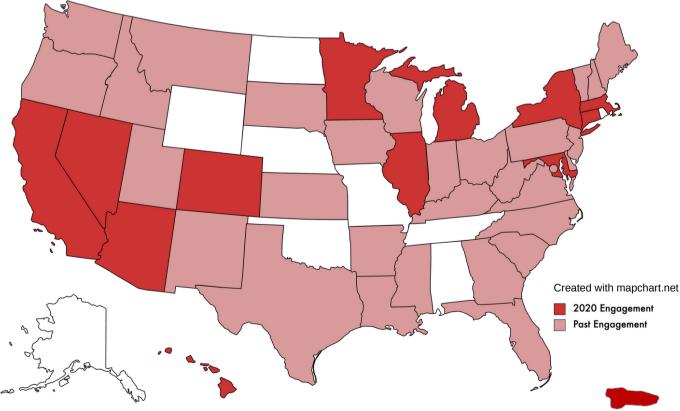


Regulatory Reform

IMPROVING SOLAR AND STORAGE INTERCONNECTION

Three of Our Notable 2020 Successes

- **California:** Culminating years of engagement by IREC, in September, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) issued sweeping changes to the state's interconnection rules ("Rule 21"), including several never-before-implemented advances that significantly improve the process for adding more renewable energy to the grid.
- Minnesota: At IREC's recommendation, and with the support of other stakeholders, the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission required improvements to Hosting Capacity Analysis (HCA) results from the utility Xcel that will make the HCA data more useful for clean energy developers. HCA is a valuable grid transparency tool that can show where additional distributed energy resources (DERs), like solar or energy storage, can be added without the need for costly upgrades and/or lengthy interconnection studies.
- Maryland: After nearly two years of deliberation, The Maryland Public Service Commission adopted updated interconnection rules, shaped in part by IREC's expert insight, that will improve the efficiency of the interconnection process for customers and utilities, increase grid transparency, and enable a clearer pathway for energy storage and solar-plus-storage systems.



WHERE WE ENGAGED



Regulatory Reform

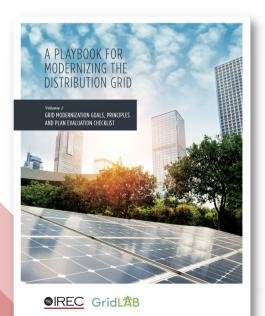
BUILDING A TECHNICALLY RELIABLE INTERCONNECTION EVOLUTION FOR STORAGE (BATRIES)

Energy storage technologies have a crucial role to play in enabling the transition to a low-carbon economy. Yet despite significant growth of the energy storage market in recent years, the process of connecting this technology to the electric grid remains complex and unclear in many states across the U.S.



With support from the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office, IREC is leading a team of partners to simplify the interconnection process for standalone energy storage and solar-plus-storage projects. **"BATRIES"—Building a Technically Reliable Interconnection Evolution for Storage**—will address the barriers to storage interconnection and identify solutions that will pave the way for rapid deployment of storage on the distribution grid.

GRIDMOD PLAYBOOK



IREC and GridLab released *A Playbook for Modernizing the Distribution Grid* (aka the "*GridMod Playbook*"), an evaluation toolkit to help regulatory stakeholders navigate, analyze, and make more informed decisions about grid modernization proposals, distribution plans, and grid investments.

The *GridMod Playbook* aims to ensure more efficient and impactful grid modernization efforts in support of state public policy goals, such as clean energy adoption, across the United States and U.S. territories.

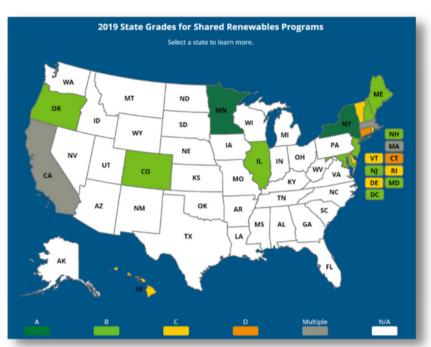


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Regulatory Reform

IEEE 1547.1-2020: A KEY STANDARD FOR DISTRIBUTED ENERGY RESOURCES

A long-awaited, standard from the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) —**Standard 1547.1[™]-2020**—was released, creating nationally applicable guidance for distributed energy resource (DER) manufacturers on how grid support functions in their products will be tested. This paves the way for U.S. states to adopt more modern interconnection requirements for DERs on the grid, contributing to the grid modernization that will be needed to support high levels of renewable energy and energy storage. IREC's Chief Regulatory Engineer, Brian Lydic, is a member of the IEEE working group that contributed to the development of this standard.



SHARED RENEWABLES SCORECARD & POLICY CATALOG

Community solar and other forms of shared renewables are important in enabling equitable access for those who face technical or financial hurdles to adopting solar, including low- and moderate-income communities. IREC released the latest issue of its National Shared Renewables Scorecard in 2020, a tool for evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of shared renewable energy programs, and the companion Shared Renewables Policy Catalog, detailing states' rules for shared renewables programs.

These tools help policymakers and shareholders understand the strengths and weaknesses of different programs and improve their effectiveness.

"What I love about IREC is that we work on the totally nerdy but absolutely necessary elements of a high-performance low-carbon grid. It's not always the easiest stuff to explain but it's the essential stuff to examine on our way to a highly effective and low-cost clean energy system."

—Dan Reicher, IREC Board member, Senior Research Scholar at Stanford's Woods Institute for Environment, and former DOE Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy



High-Quality Clean Energy Workforce Training and Accreditation

IREC leads efforts to cultivate the diverse, highly skilled clean energy workforce of the future. We work collaboratively across sectors to remove barriers to the deployment of clean energy by identifying workforce gaps and developing training, credentials, and other solutions. IREC partners with national and regional stakeholders and subject-matter-experts in a variety of sectors, including solar and storage, energy efficiency, home performance, code enforcement, and the fire service. The pending merger with The Solar Foundation, which has a long record of experience and accomplishments in solar industry workforce development, will strengthen the breadth and reach of IREC's impact.

WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (WAP) SUBGRANTEE TRAINING



In partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), IREC created an innovative **online training program** to help administrative staff at subgrantee organizations of DOE's Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)—the country's single largest residential whole-house energy efficiency program—run efficient and effective weatherization operations.

In the first eight months of the program, over 20,000 courses were completed.

CLEAN ENERGY CREDENTIALING

IREC's credentialing program supports quality assurance in the clean energy sector as it rapidly evolves. As one of the leading accrediting bodies for clean energy training in the United States, IREC accredits more than 100 training providers across the country.



Solairgen's IRECaccredited PV Installation Training Program, Dahlonega GA



Workforce Training and Accreditation

GREEN BUILDINGS CAREER MAP

Through a three-year cooperative agreement with DOE's Building Technologies Office (BTO), IREC and its partners began the development of an **interactive career map** that highlights the breadth of rewarding career opportunities in the building energy efficiency sectors.



With this resource, IREC and partners will conduct a national outreach campaign to reach an audience of diverse stakeholders and foster a talent pipeline that is inclusive of low-income and other underserved populations. This is IREC's third career map, firmly establishing IREC as a leader in the promotion and expansion of clean energy careers.

CLEAN ENERGY ONLINE TRAINING



As the COVID-19 pandemic shut down workplaces across the U.S. and restricted many employees to working from home, training organizations met this challenge by expanding their online training options. Leveraging our specialization in instructional design for online learning, IREC created **best practices for online learning** for adults geared toward clean energy training organizations who plan to offer online learning in the face of the pandemic and beyond.

On Weatherization Assistance Program Training:

"This new training is extremely helpful and engaging. When I joined our agency's WAP program two years ago, I used the auditor's field guide and policies and procedures manuals as training materials. It is great to have everything in one place now focused on the job responsibilities of program administrators."

-Sarah Murphy, SLS Helps, New Hampshire



The Solar Foundation

Workforce Development

The Solar Foundation's programs will be key components of the combined organization's work when the merger with IREC is completed in 2021. In this transitional phase, we are excited to highlight the 2020 successes of The Solar Foundation's flagship initiatives alongside IREC's related program areas.

SOLAR READY VETS NETWORK

The Solar Foundation leads several initiatives under the U.S. Department of Energy's **Solar Ready Vets Network**, as part of its commitment to advancing a highly skilled and diverse solar workforce. One of these is the Solar Ready Vets Fellowship, led in partnership with the U.S.Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Hiring Our Heroes Initiative.



In 2020, nine transitioning military service members were placed in fellowships with solar employers to support a smooth transition from military service to the civilian solar workforce. The Solar Foundation also worked in partnership with the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners to obtain approvals from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to make solar exam fees eligible for reimbursement under the GI Bill. In addition, a partnership was established with a commercial solar installation firm in Virginia supporting a solar training program for veterans.

PUERTO RICAN SOLAR BUSINESS ACCELERATOR



Ever since Hurricanes Maria and Irma devastated Puerto Rico in 2017, The Solar Foundation has committed to support energy resilience on the island through the development of solar and battery storage. **The Puerto Rican Solar Business Accelerator (PRSBA)** supports a thriving solar industry and workforce in Puerto Rico, in partnership with Pathstone Corporation. Its work includes:

- A workforce development initiative to bridge gaps between training and industry needs
- A finance initiative to make solar energy and storage more affordable for a wider sector of the residential and commercial population
- Technical and capital assistance to local solar companies
- Two microgrid pilot projects in Puerto Rico communities



The Solar Foundation

Workforce Development

ANNUAL NATIONAL SOLAR JOBS CENSUS

The Solar Foundation released its 10th *National Solar Jobs Census*, an authoritative report that provides data on solar employment at the federal, state, and local levels, as well as a comprehensive analysis of the U.S. solar workforce. For the past decade, the *Solar Jobs Census* has tracked the nationwide jobs growth that has come with the rapid expansion of the solar industry.



The *Solar Jobs Census* is a critical source of information for policymakers, businesses, academics, and the general public on the jobs impact of the U.S. solar industry. This report is used regularly to advocate for solar-friendly policies at all levels of government. The latest *Solar Jobs Census* report included solar employment data at the national level and in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. It also included a breakdown of solar jobs by industry sector and market segment, and analysis of key policies and trends that impacted the industry. The report looked at key workforce development challenges including the difficulty meeting hiring needs, along with case studies on how companies are meeting these challenges.

U.S. SOLAR INDUSTRY DIVERSITY STUDY



The National Solar Jobs Census tracks demographic information on the U.S. solar workforce, including participation by gender, race and ethnicity, and veteran status. This data is an important first step to addressing the underrepresentation of women and people of color in the solar workforce. The Solar Foundation and IREC are committed to diversity, inclusion, and equity in solar and other clean energy industries.

To that end, The Solar Foundation has regularly published the *U.S. Solar Industry Diversity Study*, most recently in 2019, to provide more in-depth data on wages, career advancement, and career pathways in the solar industry. In 2020, The Solar Foundation joined leading solar companies and trade associations to launch the Renewables Forward initiative, which shares resources and best practices to advance diversity and inclusion.



Local Initiatives to Advance Clean Energy at the Local Level

IREC's Local Initiatives program informs, guides, incentivizes, and supports local governments, communities, and individuals to take actions that increase the deployment of clean energy and implementation of energy efficiency.

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY ACTION COMMITTEE (SEAC)



With support from the U.S. Department of Energy, IREC became the administrator of the **Sustainable Energy Action Committee (SEAC)** and expanded it into a national forum that brings together diverse stakeholders to develop solutions to clean energy code enforcement and permitting challenges.

The project will facilitate improvements in the permitting and inspection of solar and solar-plus-storage projects by developing consensus-based solutions to high-priority codes and standards needs. In 2020, the first year of this three-year project, SEAC and IREC conducted an extensive analysis to identify and prioritize gaps in understanding and implementation that complicate code enforcement and deter clean energy deployment, and began a consensus process to develop solutions.



"What I appreciate the most about SEAC, and IREC, is the ability to network in an open forum with experienced and trusted members of the solar community to have my questions and concerns heard. Often, I am given solid guidance or learn something new about the industry. Without these relationships, my business would be more uncertain and challenging and I might be unaware of issues that could greatly affect my ability to install solar."

-Mark Rodriguez, Senior Jurisdiction Specialist, Operations at Sunrun



The Solar Foundation

Local Initiatives

SOLSMART

The Solar Foundation leads **SolSmart**, a groundbreaking program launched in 2016 that helps local governments expand solar energy markets, funded by the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Energy Technologies Office and implemented in partnership with the International City/County Management Association.



NATIONALLY DISTINGUISHED. LOCALLY POWERED.



Leon County, Florida achieved SolSmart Gold.

The SolSmart program offers no-cost technical assistance to municipalities, counties, and regional organizations to help them reduce barriers to solar energy development and become "open for solar business."

By the end of 2020, SolSmart had designated nearly 400 designees in 41 states and the District of Columbia since its launch, far exceeding the initial goal of designating 300 communities. Today, 99 million Americans live in a SolSmart-designated community—more than 30% of the total population.

Because local governments are often the linchpin to attracting solar business, SolSmart has become a powerful catalyst for clean energy expansion and job growth. With the help of the SolSmart technical assistance team, local governments are making it faster, easier, and more affordable to go solar.

AMERICAN CITIES CLIMATE CHALLENGE

Through the American Cities Climate Challenge funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies and Energy Foundation, The Solar Foundation provided expert guidance to help six cities develop electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure and adopt solar-ready ordinances. As a result of this guidance from The Solar Foundation and partners, St. Louis passed a solar-ready ordinance, Chicago adopted an EV-ready ordinance, and San Jose passed a solar-ready reach code for commercial and industrial buildings. The Solar Foundation also conducted a three-day solar-ready workshop for the Urban Sustainability Directors Network.



...and more

VISION SUMMIT

Early in the year, before COVID-19 took hold, IREC was fortunate to be able to safely convene the **2020 Vision Summit** in Washington, D.C. The Summit provided a space for expansive discussion on how the U.S. can reach 100% clean energy by 2050.

During the Vision Summit, clean energy leaders from across the country gathered to discuss topics that are critical to a clean energy future, including: regulatory reform or grid



transformation, training-to-job pipelines for diversity and inclusion, and the consumer and community benefits of clean energy. In addition to in-depth panel discussions, participants actively engaged with their peers to build consensus on solutions through breakout sessions and polls.

IREC'S LARGEST UNRESTRICTED DONATION, A 1.2MW SOLAR INSTALLATION



IREC received a donation of a 1.2 MWDC solar installation, valued at \$1.7 million, from The Conti Group. The donation is the largest unrestricted charitable contribution that IREC has received. Through a long-term power purchase agreement, the system will generate revenue that will help support IREC's programs for at least 13 years, enabling IREC to expand the reach of its work to make clean energy and energy efficiency more accessible and affordable.

The Solar Foundation helped make the connection that led to this donation, and the resulting revenue will benefit all programs of the combined organization.



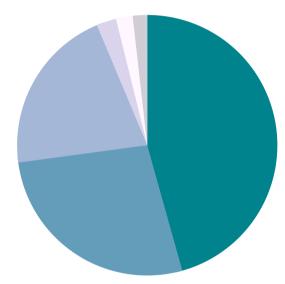
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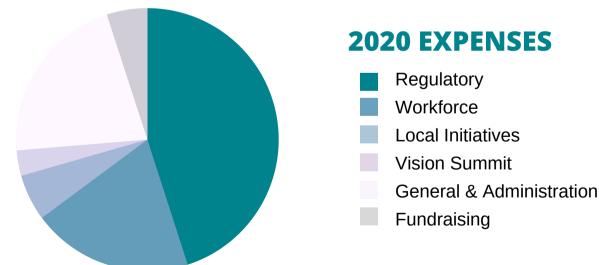
As an independent, not-for-profit organization, IREC relies on a mix of public and private funds to advance our mission to expand access to clean, sustainable energy and energy efficiency for more Americans. Diverse funding sources have supported IREC's work to:

- Advance regulatory policy best practices across dozens of states, ensuring fair and affordable clean energy access for all consumers.
- Produce trusted, thought-leading resources, tools, and model rules that inform and guide fact-based decision making on clean energy issues.
- Support development of a qualified clean energy workforce through trainings, education, and nationally-accredited credentialing efforts.
- Simplify the adoption of clean energy technologies with tools, practices, and policies that enhance efficiency and transparency.

2020 INCOME

- Donations and Sponsors
- Foundation Grants
- Government Grants and Contracts
- Organization Contracts
- Cost Share from Partners
 - Program Income





For information about The Solar Foundation's financials, contact us at info@irecusa.org.



2020 FUNDERS & DONORS IREC and The Solar Foundation



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Project Manager







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IREC's committed volunteer Board of Directors provides diverse expertise and guides the organization in establishing goals, determining strategies, and publicizing events, reports and results of IREC's work.

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Jetta Wong JLW Advising

Larry Sherwood IREC President, Chief Executive Officer

SUPPORT IREC

Demand for IREC's expertise is growing rapidly, and additional funding is critical for IREC's team to continue its valuable work. IREC relies on private and public support to sustain our momentum and continue to build capacity to accelerate the transition to 100% clean energy.

For more information about strategic partnerships and funding opportunities, please contact: Larry Sherwood, IREC President & CEO, Larry@irecusa.org | 518-621-7379

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