

Community benefits for solar projects in the U.S.

Organization:	University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Dept of Urban and Regional Planning
Location:	Honolulu, Hawaii, USA
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Organization

Established in 1907, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa is the largest and oldest of the 10 UH campuses. Mānoa offers hundreds of undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees; a strong, vital research program; and nationally ranked NCAA Division I athletics. UH Mānoa is a research university of international standings. The Department of Urban and Regional Planning was established in 1973. The department's interdisciplinary curriculum covers all areas of planning with particular focus on the Asia-Pacific region, environmental planning and sustainability, participatory community planning, housing, and disaster management.

Context

While places across the globe are increasingly implementing renewable energy standards in light of climate change policies and efforts to significantly reduce reliance on fossil fuels, scholars are acknowledging that community acceptance for renewable energy projects is mixed, with some communities opposing such efforts. While there are debates on the nature of community opposition, there is consensus among scholars that community acceptance for renewable energy projects is integral for this renewable energy transition. In light of this challenge, more empirical research is needed to assess approaches that address community opposition and acceptance. An emerging area in the literature is the role that host community agreements play in facilitating community acceptance for a renewable energy project.

Assignment in brief

This research project constitutes the creation of a community benefits database and will examine the types of community benefits packages offered to communities across the U.S. and assess their effectiveness in obtaining community acceptance. This research will catalog the instances where such schemes were established voluntarily by the developer, or due to a mandatory law. This research will also investigate the extent to which communities participated in the development of such benefits packages, and if there is a correlation between their participation and ultimately their acceptance of a renewable energy project.

This assignment will assist in collecting data from publicly available sources that will populate this database. Some of the data that will need to be collected include:

- Owner of solar project (developer, utility, municipality)
- Whether a host community agreement exists

- Date of signed agreement between host community and developer
- Details of host community agreement
- Value of host community agreement in dollars
- Whether compensation is mandatory in that state
- Whether the state has clean energy goals
- How compensation scheme was determined (e.g. the level of community involvement)

Other

This project would be best suited for a student (bachelor's or master's level) who is interested in renewable energy and public policy. The ideal student is also internally-motivated, detail-oriented and enjoys conducting research that is both qualitative and quantitative. While there is currently no compensation for this work, there may be funding in the near future, depending on grant funding. This position is 100% remote work position; no travel required.