

**DRAFT PROPOSAL**

**Solar Gardens Institute Charter**

1. **The Solar Gardens Institute**
   1. **Statement of Purpose**

The Solar Gardens Institute (SGI), provides training and open source tools for developing inclusive community solar policy and projects everywhere.

* 1. **Cooperative Social Venture**

The Solar Gardens Institute is structured as a cooperative society following the seven cooperative principles. As a not-for-profit social venture, SGI endeavors to raise sufficient revenue and donations to support its activities, with excess revenue being returned as dividends to members.

* 1. **Merger with Solar Panel Hosting Company**

The Solar Panel Hosting Company (a Colorado LLC) merge with SGI at an appropriate date, with the surviving entity a Colorado Nonprofit named the Solar Gardens Institute.

* 1. **Code of Ethics**

SGI follows a Code of Ethics (below) that serves as a guide to all our actions.

* 1. **Charter**

Upon ratification by a 2/3 vote of Individual Members, this charter will serve as the bylaws of the Solar Gardens Institute and may be amended by 2/3 vote of the Council, followed by a 2/3 vote of the membership. *Italicized* sections serve as guidelines only and are maintained by Working Groups.

1. **SGI Membership**
   1. **SGI Member Benefits:** An SGI member may -
      1. (Individual members only) Become a certified Solar Gardener through the Solar Gardener Training in order to –
         1. Receive policy and project assistance and consultation
         2. Seek project finance from qualified developers via the SGI Request for Proposal process
         3. If the SGI Request for Proposal process is used, receive payments upon project completion and for subscriber referrals
      2. Use theSolar Gardens Institute name and logo in a responsible and appropriate manner, always including the URL solargardens.org
      3. Vote and run in elections for Elected Roles (individual members only)
      4. Apply to serve in the capacity of one or more Individual Rolesor Organizational Roles
      5. Participate in person in the annual General Meeting and regional Confluences
      6. Participate in Regional Group meetings and email lists
      7. Receive the Monthly Member Report
      8. List available skills and request expert help from other members on the Skills Exchange
      9. With a specified minimum donation, list name and organization on the SGI Website and Map
      10. Display positive actions for community solar through social media on the News Feed
      11. Suggest news items for the News Feed
      12. Review the minutes of Council Regular Meetings
      13. Refer disputes to the Council for Dispute Resolution
      14. Request action by Council through their Regional Coordinator
      15. Vote on charter amendments approved by Council (approved on two-thirds vote of membership)
   2. **SGI Member Duties:** An SGI Member will -
      1. Display the SGI Logo and endorse the SGI Mission Statementon website (organizations) or via social media (individuals).
      2. Follow the SGI Best Practices in dealings with or through SGI
      3. Each year, make a donation of at least $1 to SGI or an associated tax-deductible fund. While there are suggested donations for each membership level, the amount is less important than the act of donating. One member / one vote always applies, regardless of the size of a donation. Up to 75% of any donation may be pledged in support of a particular project, working group, regional group, or roleholder.
      4. Each month, take at least one positive action for the community solar movement (large or small) and report it via the SGI Positive Action form. This could take as little as a few minutes – the amount of time spent is less important than the intention behind the act itself. If you choose, the action will be shared on the SGI blog, newsletter, and in real time on social media. While there is no limit to the number of possible actions, SGI maintains a list of example positive actions.
      5. Not use SGI to promote specific products, services, or business models
2. **SGI Roles**
   1. All Roleholders take the Volunteer and Employee Pledge
   2. **Elected Roles**
      1. **Eligibility**
         1. Open Ballot - Other than the exceptions stated in this section, any Individual Member may run for any office for which she/he qualifies.
         2. Single office - No one shall run for or hold more than one Elected Role at a time (Exceptions – The SGI Coordinator, Regional Coordinators and Working Group Coordinators may serve on the Council)
         3. Neutrality – Elected roles shall not be used to promote a particular product or service. Sales representatives are discouraged from running for Elected Roles
         4. Members who have previously submitted a resignation or have been terminatedmust complete the Dispute Resolution Process before running for Elected Roles.
         5. Solar Gardeners are discouraged but not excluded from holding Elected Roles, because of the need for single project focus
      2. **Election Process**
         1. One Person / One Vote **-** Each Individual Member receives one vote. (Organizational members do not vote).
         2. Secret Ballot- Elections for all Elected Roles will be conducted electronically by secret ballot for a period of seven days.
         3. Management- Elections will be managed by the Secretary and validated by the General Counsel
         4. Dates- The first elections will take place 60 days after the SGI Coordinator has certified SGI has reached a level of 101 members from sufficiently diverse regions and with sufficiently diverse affiliations. Annual elections thereafter will be held at the General Meeting.
         5. Continuity of Leadership– Officers serving at the date of the first election will continue to serve for an initial term of one year following the first election.
         6. Special elections will take place 30 days after a role holder’s resignation or Council’s call for elections
      3. **List of Elected Roles**
         1. **Councilmember**
            1. Serves on a voluntary basis, taking the Volunteer and Employee Pledge
            2. Represents the interest of the SGI Membership as stated in SGI’s Mission Statement and Founding Principles
            3. Checks in with the Secretary monthly as point of contact (POC)
            4. May request action by Council on any matter
            5. Completes the Solar Gardener Training with full scholarship and engages in other reading and research as needed to make informed decisions
            6. May also serve as Regional Coordinator or Working Group Coordinator
            7. Attends monthly Regular Meetings and the annual General Meeting of the Council

Must check in with the SGI Secretary in advance if he/she cannot attend a meeting

If three consecutive meetings are missed, the Secretary will attempt to contact the delinquent Councilmember. If the Councilmember does not respond within 14 calendar days, the Secretary will note a resignation by default.

* + - * 1. Uses the email address [<first name>\_<last name>@solargardens.org](mailto:coordinator@solargardens.org) for SGI business
        2. Is an unpaid position – councilmembers may not accept gifts related to their service. Councilmembers may serve in other paid Individual Roles.
      1. **Officer**
         1. **SGI Coordinator**

Is employed full-time by SGI

Chairs the Council

Serves as Point of Contact (POC) for Officers, Fellows, Regional Coordinators, and Working Group Coordinators

Serves the legal function of Executive Director

Serves as the public face of the Solar Gardens Institute

Hires, manages, or terminates Staff Members at sole discretion

Approves elected Working Group Coordinators and Regional Coordinators (power shared with Council)

Approves alternate regional group names

May attend Regional Group and Working Group meetings

Issues policy statements or directives

May request action by Council on any matter

May request action by Working Groups and Regional Groups

May refer any matter for Dispute Resolution as necessary

Will commission a framework for Dispute resolution due process for Council approval at the first General Meeting

Uses the email address coordinator@solargardens.org for SGI business

Receives a stipend and benefits as approved by Council

* + - * 1. **Secretary**

Is employed part-time by SGI

Checks in with the SGI Coordinator weekly as point of contact (POC)

Maintains company records

Organizes the General Meeting

Attends and takes notes at Council meetings (this role may be delegated)

Serves as Point of Contact (POC) for Councilmembers

Provides meeting minutes to the membership

Manages Elections

In the event of a tied Council vote, provides the tiebreaking vote

Acts as SGI Coordinator in the event the Coordinator is unable to perform her/his duties

Refers procedural matters for Dispute Resolution as necessary

Uses the email address secretary@solargardens.org for SGI business

Receives a stipend and benefits as approved by Council

* + - * 1. **Treasurer**

Is employed part-time by SGI

Checks in with the Coordinator biweekly as Point of Contact (POC)

Manages the General Fund

Accounts for all Regional Funds and Working Group Funds

Prepares an annual budget for Council approval

May request action by the Council on financial matters

Prepares a compensation plan and updates as needed

Approves Regional Coordinator and Solar Gardener compensation

Prepares quarterly and annual reports for the Council

Refers financial matters to Dispute Resolution as necessary

Uses the email address treasurer@solargardens.org for SGI business

Receives a stipend and benefits as approved by Council

* + - 1. **Regional Coordinator**
         1. Serves on a voluntary basis, taking the Volunteer and Employee Pledge
         2. Checks in with the Coordinator (or the RC of a larger region) biweekly as point of contact (POC)
         3. Serves as Point of Contact (POC) for Regional Coordinators of sub-regions
         4. Serves as the public face for SGI in her/his region
         5. Attends Council meetings and reports on regional activities
         6. May request action from Council on matters pertaining to his/her region
         7. Refers regional matters for Dispute Resolution as necessary
         8. Passes member Requests for Action to Council
         9. Must live in the region she/he coordinates
         10. Checks in with Solar Gardeners in his/her region biweekly, acting as Point of Contact (POC)
         11. Collaborates with Working Group Coordinators on matters pertaining to her/his region
         12. Uses the email address <Region>\_coordinator@solargardens.org for SGI business
         13. May receive a stipend from Regional Group’s funds, on a majority vote of the Regional Group and approval of the Treasurer
      2. **Working Group Coordinator**
         1. Serves on a voluntary basis, taking the SGI Volunteer and Employee Pledge
         2. Checks in with the SGI Coordinator biweekly as point of contact (POC)
         3. Attends Council meetings and reports on Working Group activities
         4. May request action from Council on matters pertaining to his/her Working Group
         5. Refers matters related to her/his Working Group for Dispute Resolution
         6. Collaborates with Regional Coordinators on matters pertaining to her/his Working Group
         7. Manages working group activities
         8. Serves as Point of Contact (POC) for working group members
         9. Chairs working group meetings
         10. Uses the email address <group>\_coordinator@solargardens.org for SGI business
         11. May receive a stipend from their working group’s funds, on approval of the Treasurer
  1. **Individual Roles** 
     1. **Solar Gardener**

A Solar Gardener is a combination project manager and community organizer who is inspired to develop one or more renewable energy projects for a particular community. SGI doesn’t usually hire people to become solar gardeners - they find us. A Solar Gardener might become involved with SGI at any point from concept to multiple completed projects.

* + - 1. Is autonomous and makes decisions regarding his/her own project
      2. Serves on a voluntary basis, taking the Volunteer and Employee Pledge
      3. Receives the Solar Gardener Trainingfrom the Education Working Group, either paying tuition or deferring tuition by agreeing to volunteer at least 40 hours for SGI and participate in the Request for Proposal process.
      4. In collaboration with the Outreach Working Group,
         1. Receives and manages project web page on solargardens.org
         2. Organizes a local project group
         3. Holds local informational meetings as needed
         4. Raises funds for project pre-development via grants and donations, up to 75% of which may be used to fund the project
      5. Receives technical assistance in policy matters from the Policy Working Group
         1. State and local law
         2. Project zoning and permitting
         3. Interconnection to the utility grid
      6. Receives technical assistance in project development matters from the SGI Project Development Working Group
         1. Uses the SGI Project Development Checklist
         2. Finances the project using the SGI Request for Proposal Process
      7. Checks in with his/her Regional Coordinator biweekly as Point of Contact (POC)
      8. Upon completion of project and volunteer hours, will be considered for appointment as a Master Gardener Fellow
      9. Is usually an unpaid position, but may receive a stipend
         1. From project funds with SGI Treasurer approval
         2. From Regional Group funds with Regional Coordinator approval
         3. From the General Fund with Council approval
      10. Uses the email address <first name>\_<last name>@solargardens.org for SGI business
      11. If the SGI Request for Proposal process is used, receives payments upon project completion and for subscriber referrals
    1. **Intern**
       1. Is typically an undergraduate or graduate student
       2. Serves on a voluntary basis, taking the Volunteer and Employee Pledge
       3. Checks in with the Education Coordinator biweekly as Point of Contact (POC)
       4. Is assigned a Fellow as advisor
       5. Receives assistance on a school paper, project, or thesis from their advisor and the Education Working Group
       6. Publishes her/his work on solargardens.org
       7. By agreeing to volunteer 40 hours or more, receives a scholarship to attend the Solar Gardener Training and may list the Solar Gardens Institute on her/his resume or curriculum vitae
       8. Upon graduation and completion of volunteer hours, will be considered for appointment as an Academic Fellow
       9. Uses the email address [<first name>\_<last name>@solargardens.org](mailto:coordinator@solargardens.org) for SGI business
       10. Is usually an unpaid position, but may receive a stipend if approved by Council
    2. **Fellow**
       1. Serves on a voluntary basis, taking the Volunteer and Employee Pledge
       2. Is appointed by the SGI Coordinator
       3. Checks in with the SGI Coordinator on a monthly basis as Point of Contact (POC)
       4. May teach a unit in the Solar Gardener Training
       5. May advise Interns, Solar Gardeners, Open Source Providers, Working Groups, or Council
       6. May publish blog posts or papers on solargardens.org with approval of the SGI Coordinator
       7. May act as a spokesperson for the Solar Gardens Institute with approval of the SGI Coordinator
       8. May offer workshops at the General Meeting or Confluences
       9. Types of Fellows
          1. Academic Fellow
          2. Industry Fellow

Industry association

Nonprofit

Solar company

* + - * 1. Master Gardener (At least one completed project)
        2. Chaplain
      1. Uses the email address <first name>\_<last name>@solargardens.org for SGI business
      2. May receive a stipend or honoraria as approved by Council
    1. **Open Source Provider**
       1. Serves on a voluntary basis, taking the Volunteer and Employee Pledge
       2. Checks in with the Open Source Coordinator on a monthly basis as Point of Contact (POC)
       3. May also serve as a Fellow or Intern
       4. May receive advice from Fellows
       5. Creates open-source software or documents for SGI’s open source program
       6. Receives credit for work performed
       7. Types of Open Source Providers (partial list) –
          1. Software Engineers
          2. Attorneys
          3. Financial Modelers
          4. Legislative Policy Experts
       8. Uses the email address <first name>\_<last name>@solargardens.org for SGI business
       9. May receive a stipend or honoraria as approved by Council
    2. **Staff Member**
       1. Is a contractor or employee of the Solar Gardens Institute
       2. Is managed by the SGI Coordinator with duties as assigned
       3. Checks in weekly with the SGI Coordinator or her/his designate weekly as Point of Contact (POC)
       4. Follows SGI Best Practices in his/her work
       5. Uses the email address <title>@solargardens.org for SGI business
       6. Receives compensation as recommended by the Treasurer and approved by Council
       7. Staff member titles (partial list)
          1. Office Manager / Administrative Assistant
          2. General Counsel
          3. Webmaster

1. **Organizational Roles**

Organizational members may list their organization on the right-hand sidebar of solargardens.org in the order of the size of their donation. Organizational members receive all the benefits of membership listed above, but do not receive voting rights.

* 1. **Solar Garden Subscriber Organization**

A community owned renewable project typically has its own business structure, separate from the developer, called a subscriber organization. The most common types of subscriber organizations are limited liability corporations (LLCs), non-profits, or cooperatives. A subscriber organization may work with SGI from concept, through development, and in the operation phase. An SGI member solar garden -

* + 1. Receives all benefits of SGI Membership and performs all duties as described in Section 2
    2. Works with a certified Solar Gardener as point of contact (POC)
    3. Is listed on the solargardens.org directory and map
    4. May recruit subscribers using solargardens.org
    5. May offer subscriptions to SGI Members moving into its service area
    6. Offers SGI membership to subscribers
    7. Provides SGI with a fee of *$.05 per watt* for subscription referrals. Donations by the subscriber organization and membership fees paid by subscribers may be applied to these payments.
    8. Subscriber members may choose to donate a percentage of their receipts to the Equable Community Solar Fund to support the Inclusion Program
    9. May use SGI’s Inclusion Program to support mid- and low-income subscriptions
    10. May use the Request for Proposal process for expansion phases (optional)
    11. Uses SGI’s Principles of Responsible Solar Development and Best Practices as guidelines
  1. **Project Developer**

An SGI Project Developer Member -

* + 1. Receives all benefits of SGI Membership and performs all duties as described in Section 2
    2. Works with the SGI Coordinator or designate (National developers), or Regional Coordinator (Regional developers) as point of contact
    3. Receives a listing on the solargardens.org sidebar, sorted in order of cumulative total donation amount in the preceding year
    4. May receive a listing on a regional page, sorted in order of cumulative total donations to a Regional Fund in the preceding year
    5. May bid on SGI projects through the Request for Proposal process
    6. Provides SGI with referral fees for successful project bids. Prior donations to SGI can be applied to successful bid, commissioning or full subscription payments.
       1. *$.01 per watt at successful bid*
       2. *$.05 per watt for each subscriber sale through SGI (from subscriber organization, see above)*
       3. *Proportional to development work performed by SGI under separate contract with the Project Developer:*
          1. *$.02 per watt at system commissioning*
          2. *$.07 per watt when system fully subscribed*
    7. May train staff through the Solar Gardener Training, paying full tuition
    8. May use SGI Open Source tools to create business structures for solar garden subscriber organizations
    9. May list community solar projects on the SGI Directory and Map, each project’s subscriber organization also becoming a member
    10. May work with the Equable Community Solar Fund to develop ownership models for low and mid income subscribers
    11. May work with the Inclusion Working Group to develop projects in Environmental Justice areas with -
        1. Low average incomes
        2. Pollution from fossil fuel use or spills
        3. Climate change impacts
    12. May announce becoming a member, donations, and company milestones on the SGI Newsfeed
    13. Uses SGI’s Principles of Responsible Solar Development and Best Practices as guidelines
    14. Receives a rating based on the SGI Developer Rating Standard as defined by the Project Development Working Group
  1. **Nonprofit, Faith-based, or Governmental Members**

An SGI Nonprofit, Faith-based, or Governmental Member -

* + 1. Receives all benefits of SGI Membership and performs all duties as described in Section 2.
    2. Appoints a representative to work with the SGI Coordinator or designate (National organizations), or Regional Coordinator (Regional organizations) as point of contact.
    3. Receives a listing on the solargardens.org sidebar, sorted in order of cumulative total donations to the SGI General Fund in the preceding year
    4. May receive a listing on a regional page, sorted in order of cumulative total donations to a Regional Fund in the preceding year
    5. May receive a listing on a project page, sorted in order of cumulative total donations to a Project Fund in the preceding year
    6. May exchange membership with SGI, each organization becoming a member of the other.
    7. May provide in-kind contributions and exchange services of equal value with SGI.
    8. May train staff through the Solar Gardener Training, paying reduced tuition or deferring tuition by agreeing to provide an in-kind donation of equal value for SGI and participate in SGI’s Request for Proposal process.
    9. May place noncommercial press releases and announcements on the SGI Newsfeed
    10. May recommend its members to the SGI Coordinator for consideration as SGI Fellows
  1. **For-profit sponsor**
     1. Receives all benefits of SGI Membership and performs all duties as described in Section 2.
     2. Appoints a representative to work with the SGI Coordinator or designate (National organizations), or Regional Coordinator (Regional organizations) as point of contact.
     3. Receives a listing on the solargardens.org sidebar, sorted in order of cumulative total donations to the SGI General Fund in the preceding year
     4. May receive a listing on a regional page, sorted in order of cumulative total donations to a Regional Fund in the preceding year
     5. May receive a listing on a project page, sorted in order of cumulative total donations to a Project Fund in the preceding year
     6. May place noncommercial press releases and announcements on the SGI Newsfeed
  2. **Utility**
     1. SGI will establish one or more Regional Groups corresponding to the utility’s service territory in each state. This group will elect a Regional Coordinator to serve as point of contact to the utility for community renewable projects.

Any SGI Utility Member –

* + 1. Receives all benefits of SGI Membership and performs all duties as described in Section 2.
    2. Appoints a representative to work with the Regional Coordinator as point of contact.
    3. May offer its customers the opportunity to become SGI Members on its website or through bill inserts.
    4. Receives a listing on the solargardens.org sidebar, sorted in order of cumulative total donations to the SGI General Fund in the preceding year.
    5. May receive a listing on a regional page, sorted in order of cumulative total donations to a Regional Fund in the preceding year.
    6. May develop, own and/or administer community renewable facilities.
    7. May work with the Open Source Working Group to create community solar business models software and protocols for billing and communication.
    8. May work with the Policy Working Group to create community renewables and virtual net metering tariffs and policy.
    9. May work with the Inclusion Working Group to develop projects in Environmental Justice areas with -
       1. Low average incomes
       2. Pollution from fossil fuel use or spills
       3. Climate change impacts
    10. May train staff through the Solar Gardener Training, paying full tuition or deferring tuition by agreeing to participate in SGI’s Request for Proposal process for community renewable projects.
    11. May announce becoming a member, donations, and company milestones on the SGI Newsfeed

1. **SGI Council**
   1. **Description**
      1. Has the legal duties of a Board of Directors, and sets the general direction of SGI
      2. **Councilmembers** – the SGI council shall consist of 11 members
         1. The **SGI Coordinator**, serving on council for her/his full term as Coordinator
         2. Two **SGI Fellows**, appointed by the SGI Coordinator and serving at the pleasure of the SGI Coordinator.
         3. Three **SGI Regional Coordinators**, selected by lot from any RCs willing to serve. RCs will serve a term of one year.
         4. Five **At-large Councilmembers**, elected by the membership from any SGI Members willing to serve. At large members will serve a term of two years.
      3. **Councilmember Replacement –** If a Councilmember resigns, is removed, or is incapacitated, she/he will be replaced by the same method he/she began serving on Council. At-large Councilmembers will be replaced by special election.
      4. **Meetings**
         1. **General meetings**
            1. General meetings will take place in person once a year at a time and location determined at the previous general meeting.
            2. The first general meeting will take place in Denver, Colorado after the formation of the SGI Council
            3. At the first General Meeting, Council will adopt a framework for Dispute resolution due process
            4. General meetings will be facilitated by the SGI Coordinator or her/his designate
            5. Workshops will be held by each working group and by SGI Fellows at the general meeting
            6. Any SGI member may attend to observe the general meeting
         2. **Regular Meetings** will take place by conference call at a regular time once per month to be determined at the preceding annual General Meeting

At each Regular Meeting -

* + - * 1. Read the SGI Founding Principles
        2. Working Group Coordinators report on activities
        3. Regional Coordinators report on activities
        4. Seek consensus and vote if necessary on Requests for Action
      1. The **Secretary** will attend and take meeting minutes, but does not vote except to break a tie
      2. **Any Member may attend** the General Meeting as an observer, and review the minutes or recording of a Regular Meeting
    1. **Requests for Action**

The SGI council will first attempt to respond to a request for action by consensus and vote only if necessary.

* + - 1. By consensus or one-third vote
         1. Refer an internal matter to SGI Dispute Resolution
      2. By consensus or majority vote
         1. Establish ad-hoc working groups
         2. Make SGI policy statements or directives
         3. Approve or amend budgets and expenditures for the SGI General Fund or Working Group Funds
         4. Approve SGI Regional Coordinators and Working Group Coordinators
         5. Request action by SGI Officers, Working Groups, or Regional Groups
         6. Defer a request for action to a later meeting
         7. Deny a request for action
      3. By two-thirds vote
         1. Refer amendments to this Charter or SGI Code of Ethics to the full membership to be approved by two-thirds vote of membership
         2. Call off-cycle elections (vote of no confidence)

1. **SGI Regional Groups**
   1. An SGI Regional Group is specific to a geographic region such as a country, state, province, county, municipality, or utility service area, and uses the name Solar Gardens <Region> or another name as approved by the SGI Coordinator
   2. Any region with at least 11 active SGI members can form a regional group
   3. Within 60 days of reaching the 11 member level, the regional group will hold elections for Regional Coordinator according to SGI election rules (with eligibility limited to residents of the geographic region). The Regional Coordinator must be approved by the SGI Coordinator or Council

Each SGI Regional Group –

* 1. Coordinates the activities of SGI Solar Gardeners in the region
  2. Will vote on a proposal to form smaller regions within the main region, if more than ten projects are active within the region
  3. Holds monthly meetings by conference call
  4. Collaborates with SGI Working Groups
     1. With the SGI Policy Working Group, uses the [IREC Community Renewables Model Program Rules](http://irecusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/IREC-Community-Renewables-Report-11-16-10_FINAL.pdf) as a guide to:
        1. Work with state government on solar gardens legislation
        2. Work with utilities on tariff and interconnection policies
        3. Work with planning commissions on zoning rules
     2. With the SGI Outreach Working Group
        1. Raises funds for regional group activities through donations and grants
        2. Maintains a regional page on solargardens.org
        3. Maintains an email listserv for communication between the members
        4. Hosts an annual Confluence event
  5. Manage its own funds and fundraise under the SGI name and logo. Up to 75% of donations may be dedicated to a particular Regional Group, Working Group, or Project, with the remaining 25% going to the SGI General Fund
  6. Will not be used to promote specific products, services, or business models

1. **SGI Working Groups**

Each SGI working group-

* 1. Is open to all SGI members
  2. Meets by conference call biweekly, facilitated on a rotating basis
  3. Maintains an email listserv for communication between the members
  4. Maintains a working group page on solargardens.org
  5. Conducts a workshop at the annual General Meeting
  6. Manages a fund specific to its purposes under the auspices of the Treasurer
  7. Elects a coordinator. When a working group reaches five active members, the group will hold an election for a working group coordinator, to be approved by the Coordinator or Council
  8. Is not used to promote specific products, services, or business models
  9. List of Working Groups
     1. **Education** 
        1. Education Coordinator serves as POC for Interns
        2. Is advised by Fellows
        3. Manages the Skills Exchange
        4. Produces education content for Confluences in conjunction with the Outreach Working Group
        5. Records video of Confluences and Workshops and makes slideshows from speakers’ presentation decks for solargardens.org and the Solar Gardener Training
        6. Develops a curriculum for the Solar Gardener Training (see below)
        7. Seeks accreditation for the Solar Gardener Training under [IREC / ANSI standard 14732](http://www.irecusa.org/wp-content/uploads/IREC-Standard-14732-January-10-2013.pdf)
        8. Works with colleges, universities, and technical schools to offer the Solar Gardener Training for course credit
     2. **The SGI Outreach Working Group** 
        1. **Raises funds** 
           1. Donations
           2. Crowdfunding
           3. Grants
        2. **Through Traditional Media** 
           1. Develops a media communication strategy
           2. Identifies and maintain a list of media outlets
           3. Issues press releases
        3. **Through Online / Social Media**
           1. Collaborates with the SGI Webmaster on website design for solargardens.org
           2. Receives materials for the SGI Newsfeed

News suggestions from the membership

Positive Actions from the membership

Action items from the Policy Working Group

Completed project milestones from the Project Development Working Group

* + - * 1. Publishes the SGI Newsfeed to –

The SGI Blog blog.solargardens.org

The SGI Twitter feed @solargardens

The Solar Gardens Facebook page

The Solar Gardens LinkedIn group

The SGI weekly newsletter on Mailchimp

* + - 1. **Membership** 
         1. Publishes the SGI Monthly Member Newsletter
         2. Advertises SGI Membership
         3. Conducts membership drives
      2. **Events**
         1. Plans the annual SGI General Meeting
         2. Works with SGI Regional Coordinators to plan annual SGI Confluence events in each region
         3. Works with SGI Solar Gardeners to plan local informational meetings
    1. **Open Source**

The Open Source Working Group uses the Creative Commons Not for Profit Attribution / Share Alike license for its products.

* + - 1. **Communications Protocols** – Works with utility experts to develop or adopt open standards to communicate subscription information and changes between subscriber organizations and utilities.
      2. **Software**

Develops or adopts software to

* + - * 1. Implement SGI Communication protocols
        2. Manage solar garden subscriber databases
        3. Handle billing, accounting, and donations
      1. Develops or adopts template **Legal Documents**
         1. Project development documents

Site lease

Subscriber organization legal structure

Request for Proposal

Subscriber contract

Microloan documents for sponsors

* + - * 1. Solar gardener contract
        2. Template grant proposal
      1. Develops and adopts open source **Financial models** for community renewable projects
      2. Publishes template legislation and other material from the Policy Working Group
      3. Works with the Inclusion Working Group to create inclusive legal structures and financial models
    1. **Project Development** 
       1. Provides technical assistance to Solar Gardeners
       2. Produces and revises the Project Development Checklist template on Basecamp
       3. Produces the SGI Developer Rating Standard for project developers based on the Code and other objective criteria
       4. Rates and qualifies developers based on the SGI Developer Rating standard
       5. Reviews developer ratings once per year
       6. Works with the SGI Inclusion Working Group to encourage project development in Environmental Justice areas with -
          1. Low average incomes
          2. Pollution from fossil fuel use or spills
          3. Climate change impacts
       7. Manages the SGI Request for Proposal process

The SGI Request for Proposal process –

* + - * 1. Is open to trained and certified SGI Solar Gardeners
        2. Requires that sufficient project milestones be met, possibly including:

Signed site lease from the project host

Project permits from local planning authorities

Preliminary interconnection approval from the utility

* + - 1. Reports project milestones to the SGI newsfeed
    1. **Policy**
       1. Develops SGI White Papers on policy matters
       2. Works with Regional Coordinators on state, local, and utility level policy matters
          1. Template legislation
          2. Template zoning rules
       3. Works with utilities and utilities commissions on
          1. Community solar tariffs
          2. Virtual net metering policies
          3. Community solar program rules
          4. Grid interconnection policies
       4. Publishes policy templates on the SGI Open Source Working Group’s web page
       5. Works with the SGI Inclusion Working Group on inclusive community solar policy at all levels
       6. Works with the Interstate Renewable Energy Council to revise the IREC Community Renewables Program Guidelines
       7. Works with political action groups such as Vote Solar and ASES on policy matters
       8. Works with groups such as the American Planning Association (APA) and county planning agencies to develop zoning rules for community scale renewables
       9. Works with EPA and other government agencies on environmental rules and brownfield development
       10. Sends action items for SGI Newsfeed to the Outreach Working Group
    2. **Inclusion** - dedicated to the community solar for all income levels and demographic groups
       1. Administers the Low Income Program and SGI Equable Community Solar Fund
       2. Works with the SGI Open Source Working Group to create inclusive legal structures and financial models
       3. Works with the SGI Project Development Working Group to encourage program development in Environmental Justice areas with -
          1. Lower average incomes
          2. Pollution from fossil fuel use or spills
          3. Climate change impacts
       4. Works with the SGI Policy Working Group on inclusive community solar policy at all levels
       5. Works with SGI Solar Gardeners and nonprofits such as Grid Alternatives and the Center for Social Inclusion to identify middle- and low-income subscribers

1. **Solar Gardener Training -**
   1. Is taught by SGI Fellows, Officers, and Staff
   2. Has in-person sessions, but is mainly taught online both synchronously and asynchronously as a massive online open course (MOOC)
   3. Requires a tuition fee which will be deferred if the student agrees to volunteer at least 40 hours and bid the project through the Request for Proposal Process
   4. Fellows may act as student advisors
   5. Interns may act as teaching assistants
   6. Includes the following topics as determined by the Education Working Group
      1. *Introduction to solar energy (optional)*
      2. *SGI Code of Ethics*
      3. *History of community solar*
      4. *Community Solar Policy*
      5. *Environmental Justice – Community solar for all income levels*
      6. *Solargardens.org project page and checklist*
      7. *Organizing a local group*
      8. *Siting a solar project*
      9. *Project Legal Structures*
      10. *Solar Project Financing*
      11. *Working with hosts – The SGI Open Source Site Lease*
      12. *Working with local government - Zoning and project permitting*
      13. *Working with utilities - Interconnecting a solar project*
      14. *Working with developers – the SGI Request for Proposal process*
      15. *Subscriber marketing*
      16. *Managing a solar garden*
      17. *Community Solar for Communities of Faith (optional)*
2. **Skills Exchange**
   1. SGI will maintain a list of member’s skills on solargardens.org
   2. Any member may choose to list available skills on the exchange
   3. Any member who chooses to list may contact another listing member to ask for a paid engagement or skills barter
   4. Working Groups and Regional Groups may offer volunteer or paid opportunities to listing members
3. **Inclusion Program**
   1. Enables people with low to moderate incomes who cannot afford up front payments to own a solar subscription by allowing individuals or organizations
   2. Uses a financial model such as Community plus Third Party Ownership (affectionately called “C3PO”) to allow the sponsor to achieve a rate of return, while accomplishing the ultimate transfer of ownership to the subscriber.
   3. Uses one of the following structures for sponsorship:
      1. Cooperative membership
      2. Purchase of a security
      3. Microloan
   4. The Equable Community Solar Fund (ECSF) will provide the necessary administrative, legal, accounting, and outreach functions to develop the program, with fiscal sponsorship through the Community Power Network.
   5. A solar garden subscriber may contribute to sponsorships or the ECSF by donating a percentage of her/his bill credits or other revenue, or by pledging a fixed amount per year.
4. **Suggested donations** (as determined by the Outreach Working Group)
   1. **Monetary donations**
      1. *SGI Subscriber Pledge: 5-10% of bill credits or return from a community solar investment to support solar ownership by limited income members*
      2. *Solar Garden: $1 per kilowatt of peak capacity*
      3. *$1 Limited income (less than 185% of federal poverty line)*
      4. *$10-20 Student*
      5. *$25-35 Individual*
      6. *$100 Flower (Minimum for listing local organization)*
      7. *$250 Branch*
      8. *$500 Stem*
      9. *$1000 Root (Minimum for listing regional organization or utility co-op)*
      10. *$5000 Garden Bed (Minimum for listing national organization or Investor Owned Utility)*
   2. In-kind donations
      1. *Legal services*
      2. *Financial modeling*
      3. *Software – web development*
      4. *Office work*
5. **Positive Actions –**
   1. Each Member performs least one positive action for community solar each month, and reports them to SGI using the positive action report form
   2. Positive actions are posted to the Newsfeed and the monthly member newsletter
   3. Sample Actions (list maintained by the Outreach Working Group)
      1. Quick Actions (a few minutes)
         1. *Inviting an individual or organization to become a Member*
         2. *Sharing a link to the Newsfeed*
         3. *Sharing a blog post or SGI web page via social media*
         4. *Providing useful information to a regional email list*
         5. *Making a donation to SGI*
         6. *Providing feedback for developer ratings*
      2. Solid Actions (up to a few hours)
         1. *Making an in-kind contribution*
         2. *Writing a blog post, press release, or news article about SGI*
         3. *Writing an elected official, zoning board, or utility in support of good policy*
         4. *Sharing a skill through the Skills Exchange*
         5. *Performing data entry or office work*
         6. *Attending the General Meeting, a Confluence, or an informational meeting*
      3. Significant Actions (over a period of days or weeks) – requires taking the SGI Volunteer and Employee Pledge
         1. *Writing a grant for SGI*
         2. *Locating a potential site for community solar*
         3. *Serving as an event coordinator for the General Meeting, a Confluence, or an informational meeting*
         4. *Assisting with organizing the General Meeting*
         5. *Offering a workshop at the General Meeting or a Confluence*
         6. *Attending the Solar Gardener Training*
         7. *Teaching a class for the Solar Gardener Training*
         8. *Serving as an advisor or teaching assistant for the Solar Gardener Training*
         9. *Creating an open source document*
      4. Ongoing Actions (sustained over time) – requires the SGI Volunteer and Employee Pledge
         1. *Serving on a Working Group*
         2. *Serving under an Individual or Elected Role*
         3. *Developing open source software*
6. **Dispute Resolution Process**
   1. Internal matters will be referred to the Dispute Resolution Process
      1. Any matter by consensus or one-third vote of Council
         1. Any member may request Council for Dispute Resolution
      2. Any matter by the SGI Coordinator
      3. Procedural matters by the Secretary
      4. Financial matters by the Treasurer
      5. Regional matters by Regional Coordinators
      6. Matters related to Working Groups by Working Group Coordinators
   2. The Secretary will maintain a list of potential mediators for Dispute Resolution
   3. The SGI Code of Ethics will serve as a guide for Dispute Resolution
   4. The SGI Coordinator will commission a framework for Dispute Resolution to be approved by Council at the first General Meeting
   5. Dispute Resolution will use one or more methodologies of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) including, but not limited to:
      1. Mediation
      2. Restorative Justice
      3. Nonviolent Communication
      4. Ho’oponopono (traditional Hawaiian / Polynesian technique)
7. **SGI Volunteer and Employee Pledge**
   1. As an SGI volunteer, I recognize that others depend on the work that I do, and I will treat my responsibility as equal to paid work.
   2. I resolve not to overcommit, and to maintain my self-care (on an airplane, the flight attendant always advises you to put on your own oxygen mask before helping others)
   3. I resolve to finish the work that I start.
   4. I resolve to follow the SGI Best Practices in my work.
   5. I resolve to act with integrity, bringing any issues directly to the person(s) involved or to Dispute Resolution (no gossip)
   6. I can expect the following from SGI -
      1. Regular guidance from and communication with my Point of Contact (POC)
      2. A reply to my emails and phone calls from my POC within 2 working days
      3. Clear expectations and informed consent regarding duties and hours
      4. Autonomy in my work process
      5. Recognition for my work
      6. Access to SGI’s Dispute resolution process
   7. I recognize the following is expected of me
      1. I will perform the work I agree to on schedule
      2. I will attend all meetings on time
      3. I will treat everyone with respect
      4. I will check in with my POC on a regular basis as agreed, at least once per month
      5. I will commit to a particular number of hours per month. If in a particular month I cannot offer this number of hours, or if I exceed this number of hours, I will promptly inform my POC
      6. If, for reasons beyond my control, I am not able to perform my duties on schedule, I will promptly inform my POC
      7. I will respond to phone calls or email from my POC or SGI Officers within 2 working days
      8. If I am issued a solargardens.org email address I will use this address for all company business and not for personal business
      9. I will not use any SGI activity to promote a specific product, service, or business model
8. **Solar Gardens Institute Code of Ethics**
   1. **Solar Gardens Institute Mission Statement** – What we stand for
      1. To **educate** and learn from the public about community solar energy.
      2. To promote good community energy **policy** at the federal, state, and local levels
      3. To **assist** **local organizations** in organizing, developing, and managing community-owned solar energy projects everywhere.
      4. To provide a way for everyone to own solar panels, making clean energy **affordable and available** for all humanity.
   2. **Cooperative Principles**
      1. **Voluntary and Open Membership** Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all people able to use its services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.
      2. **Democratic Member Control** Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members—those who buy the goods or use the services of the cooperative—who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.
      3. **Members' Economic Participation** Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. This benefits members in proportion to the business they conduct with the cooperative rather than on the capital invested.
      4. **Autonomy and Independence** Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If the co-op enters into agreements with other organizations or raises capital from external sources, it is done so based on terms that ensure democratic control by the members and maintains the cooperative’s autonomy.
      5. **Education, Training and Information** Cooperatives provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative. Members also inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperatives.
      6. **Cooperation among Cooperatives** Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.
      7. **Concern for Community** While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of communities through policies and programs accepted by the members.
   3. **Definition of Community Clean Energy** – the scope of our work
      1. Community clean energy is initiated through a **grassroots** process with all stakeholders at the table.
      2. Community clean energy is as **distributed** as possible - if not on your roof, in your neighborhood. If not in your neighborhood, within your county. And if not in your county, in a sister community with a complementary energy profile (one sunny, the other windy, say).
      3. Community clean energy takes into account all **externalities** - carbon footprint, land use, and visual + auditory impacts.
      4. Community clean energy is integrated into the local environment with **multiple uses** - providing shade, co-located with local food production, or used as public art. A solar garden should be a place people want to go.
      5. Community clean energy **supports** **local institutions** - agriculture, religious or environmental groups, schools, libraries, community centers, etc.
      6. Community clean energy is **owned in common** or fractionally by its users, or leased-to-own.
      7. Community clean energy **keeps money local**, re-investing revenue in improvements.
      8. Community clean energy **supports local business** entrepreneurs, workers, and non-profits.
      9. Community clean energy **keeps people engaged** in groups, helping them become more sustainable in every way.
      10. Community clean energy groups **work together**, share resources and knowledge, reach out to other communities, and work for further reform.
   4. **SGI Founding Principles –** how we do business
      1. **We are independently owned**with a voice for all members”, and follow responsible business practices.
      2. We are **vendor-neutral and technology-neutral**, supporting a level playing field for installers.
      3. We work with **local** designers, artists, and contractors, and seek partnership with local nonprofits, companies, and agencies.
      4. We follow **responsible solar principles**, going above and beyond existing rules to produce responsible green power.
      5. We **work with the land** and the urban environment at human scale to create a solar age we can be proud of.
      6. We respect**farming and ranching** ways of life, and past and future generations.
      7. We **listen**to the community, giving a hand up to those who need it.
      8. We support **an open forum** for all stakeholders, and an honest discussion of the trade-offs.
      9. We agree to **respect** **one another**, understanding that distributed energy supporters can have differing views on climate and energy development.
      10. We support **excellence in our team**by offering flexibility and giving every member a chance to make their best contribution
   5. **Principles of Responsible Solar Development –** How we work with projects
      1. **Tree Preservation:**By hosting panels on another rooftop or a community solar garden, people can protect the trees that shade their houses.
      2. **Share the Land** with ecological restoration and agricultural stewardship, using easements.  Plant trees and hedges for visual screening that also take carbon out of the air.  Combine with features like roads, power lines, and snow fences.
      3. **Shade Over Pavement**instead of competing with photosynthesis.  It’s better to place the solar panels on shade structures above paved areas such as parking lots and driveways.  New cars can plug in here.
      4. **Solar Good Neighbor Policy:**  Consider neighbors’ needs in planning installations.  Since neighbors might be installing as well, develop a neighborhood plan.
      5. **Limit Facility Scale:**  Build to fit within the urban or rural landscape, with most PV facilities less than 1 Megawatt in size.  Use existing distribution lines.  The grid is the tree, and the solar panels are the leaves.
      6. **Use Local Designers:** Architects, artists, and even kids can create concepts for installations that reflect local character.
      7. **Smart Microgrids:** Renewable energy and storage can power whole neighborhoods, making them more resilient in the face of grid disruptions
      8. **Responsible Business Practices:** Build using local and recycled materials.  Employ local, empowered worker-owners.  Minimize use of toxic materials, use no herbicides, and maximize energy efficiency.
      9. **Local Ownership and Micro-Financing:** Everyone must have the option to own their solar panels.  Promote a good price for selling responsible solar power to the grid, and low interest financing through public loan guarantees.
      10. **A hand up for those who need it:**Support a non-profit that donates panels to low and middle income people, who then pass on their savings to solarize more homes.
   6. **SGI Best Practices** – How we interact within our community of communities
      1. **Openness –** Our community is open to all humanity. Anyone may become an SGI member.
      2. **Autonomy –** We recognize and respect local decision-making processes with regard to projects and activities. Every solar gardener is a free agent. We practice informed consent with all stakeholders. We do not give orders.
      3. **Inclusivity –** We strive to have all stakeholders involved in any decision. We do not cut people out of the loop or make backroom deals.
      4. **Diversity –** We recognize and respect diverse worldviews and value systems in the communities with which we interact. We do not discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived income or socioeconomic class, disability, neurological type, familial status, gender identity or presentation, sexual orientation, sex or gender, size or appearance, religion or beliefs, race or color, national origin, veteran status, or genetic information. We practice the highest level of accountability in maintaining our diversity policy.
      5. **Transparency –** Transcripts or recordings of SGI council and working group meetingsare made available to the membership. SGI will not sign nondisclosure agreements.
      6. **Neutrality –** We do not favor one developer, organization, or business model over another. We use an open Request For Proposal process to assign accredited developers to projects. SGI will not form exclusive relationships.
      7. **Objectivity –** We use measurable criteria in our decision-making processes, accreditation and ratings systems, and our hiring and accountability practices.
      8. **Respect** – We treat everyone the way we would like to be treated. We do not use obscenity or profanity, and as we are aware and able follow the principles of Nonviolent Communication.
      9. **Integrity –** We avoid Disputes of interest and motives of personal gain. We do not steal projects. We are fair in giving credit and in our compensation practices.
      10. **Accountability –** We assure that any actions taken in the name of or in partnership with SGI are in conformance with the SGI Code of Ethics (Mission, Founding Principles, Principles of Responsible Solar Development, and Best Practices), with particular attention to the Practices of Inclusivity, Respect, Integrity, and Diversity. We use alternative dispute resolution and due process in maintaining accountability standards.