

# U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon Build Challenge Prize Award Disbursement, and Approval to Proceed Process

## 1 Prize Award Process

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Solar Decathlon® is a collegiate competition, comprising 10 Contests, that challenges student teams to design and build highly efficient and innovative buildings powered by renewable energy. DOE is excited to join two student building design competitions, Solar Decathlon and Race to Zero, into one new Solar Decathlon competition. The winners will be those teams that best blend architectural and engineering excellence with innovation, market potential, building efficiency, and smart energy production.

This Solar Decathlon, which spans 2019 and 2020, gives teams the option to participate in one of two Challenges: the *Design Challenge* or the *Build Challenge*. The Solar Decathlon Build Challenge comprises two Divisions: the National Showcase Division and Local Build Division.

Organizers will provide cash awards to collegiate teams participating in either of the Build Challenge Divisions to increase their likelihood of success. This challenge is being held pursuant to 42 USC 7381b(a)(14).

## 2 Prize Award Summary

### 2.1 Background

The Solar Decathlon Build Challenge Prize Awards are designed to reward successful progress in preparing for the Build Challenge Events, increasing the likelihood of a successful program. This prize consists of two parallel and integrated features: The Solar Decathlon Competition, inclusive of the 2020 Build Challenge, and the Build Challenge Prize Awards. Teams selected as Competitors into the Solar Decathlon 2020 Build Challenge are the only teams eligible to win Prize Awards under this program.

The Prize Awards are a series of three progressive phases that incentivize the nation's collegiate institutions to rapidly discover, research, iterate, and deliver new solutions for the building industry. This new approach to supporting collegiate institution research and development not only provides cash prizes but also engages America's collegiate institutions to help students achieve their professional goals.

### 2.2 Prize Award Amounts and Disbursement Schedule

Competitors in the Solar Decathlon Build Challenge are eligible to receive Prize Awards for completing work in advance of the competition period. DOE will award \$130,000 to each of the National Showcase Division teams and \$25,000 to each of the Local Build Division teams that are approved to compete.

Prize disbursement will occur at the completion of competition phases as follows:

**Table 1. Solar Decathlon Build Challenge Prize Disbursement**

<b>Division</b>	<b>Award Disbursement Threshold</b>	<b>Approximate Date</b>	<b>Prize Award %</b>	<b>Prize Award Amount</b>
National Showcase	Design Development Phase, upon receipt of approval to proceed	May 2019	40%	\$52,000
National Showcase	Construction Documentation Phase, upon receipt approval to proceed	November 2019	40%	\$52,000
National Showcase	Construction Completion on the National Mall, upon receipt of approval to compete	June 2020	20%	\$26,000
Local Build	Design Development Phase, upon receipt of approval to proceed	May 2019	100%	\$25,000

The cash prizes will incentivize successful participation and scoring in the Solar Decathlon Build Challenge. Although receiving Prize Awards and an approval to proceed are necessary prerequisites for earning points in the competition, awarding prizes does not impact the actual scoring or awarding of points in the Solar Decathlon Build Challenge, which are determined in accordance with the Solar Decathlon Competition Guide.

## 2.3 Phases and Approval to Proceed

At the conclusion of the design development, construction documentation, and construction phases, independent professionals will evaluate the teams for an approval to proceed and associated Prize Awards. Teams must demonstrate progress in each competition phase as follows:

1. **Design Development Phase:** Competitors will demonstrate that they have completed the design development phase and have developed a project management plan with a path to successful participation in the Solar Decathlon Build Challenge. They will also propose a path to success through a project management plan. A panel of expert reviewers from industry, national labs, and government will evaluate submissions and presentations as part of the 2019 Design Challenge Weekend at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) in Golden, Colorado, April 12–14, 2019 and determine approvals to proceed.
2. **Construction Documentation Phase:** Competitors will demonstrate that they have completed their construction documentation, that their design is compliant with the Solar Decathlon Build Challenge Rules and Building Code and that the team has a high likelihood of successful construction, exhibition, and participation as part of the overall Solar Decathlon Competition. Teams must also show that they have the financial resources for success through collegiate institution support and/or sponsorship(s). A panel of expert reviewers from industry, national labs, or government will evaluate submissions and determine approvals to proceed.
3. **Construction Completion Phase:** Competitors work to build a fully functional and code-compliant competition prototype house. A panel of expert reviewers from industry, national labs, or government will evaluate submissions and determine approvals to compete.

Important Dates

Note the following milestones for the 2020 Build Challenge:

- **August 2018:** The initial 2020 Build Challenge Rules are released; the team application is available on the [Solar Decathlon website](#).
- **Nov. 6, 2018, 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST):** This is the deadline by which all teams must complete their online application, including indicating which Division the team wants to enter and submitting a Build Challenge Proposal.
  - DOE will accept up to six teams for each Division, 12 in total for the Build Challenge. Dependent on funding availability and quality of applications, more or fewer teams may be accepted into either or both Divisions.
- **March 26, 2019, 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT):** Teams must submit the Design Development deliverable to the Groups.io Project Site by this deadline.
- **April 12–14, 2019: Solar Decathlon Design Challenge Weekend:** Participating teams present to industry leaders on the NREL main campus in Golden, Colorado, who evaluate each team's Design Development Documentation deliverable and Design Presentation deliverable to determine which teams will receive approval to proceed to the next phase and receive the first distribution of prize funding.
  - At least one student team member, but not more than five students total, from each team may attend in person. One faculty lead is recommended to attend; up to two are allowed to attend for each team.
- **Nov. 14, 2019, 5 p.m. EDT:** This is the deadline by which teams must submit their Construction Documentation deliverable, including 95% complete construction drawings, public project renderings, and interim project report. Industry leaders will evaluate entries to determine which teams will receive an approval to proceed and any associated prize disbursement.
- **May 12, 2020, 5 p.m. EDT:** This is the deadline by which teams must have received a Certificate of Occupancy from their Local Authority Having Jurisdiction, installed all Organizer Instrumentation Equipment, and demonstrated an accessible tour route through their house locally to organizers. Industry leaders will evaluate entries to determine which teams will receive an approval to proceed and any associated prize disbursement.
- **June 23, 2020:** This is the deadline by which National Showcase Division teams must have received their Certificate of Occupancy on the National Mall, have installed all Organizer Instrumentation Equipment, and demonstrated an accessible tour route through their house to organizers.
- **June 25–July 5, 2020: Solar Decathlon Build Challenge Event:** Teams that have received all three approvals to proceed shall exhibit and compete at the Build Challenge Event, as part of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington, D.C. Upon completion of assembly activities on the National Mall, teams will receive the final distribution of prize funding, as outlined in Table 1.

### 3 Evaluating Submissions for Prize Awards

A qualified panel of reviewers, composed of subject matter experts selected by the Prize Administrator, will score submissions according to quality of approach and level of completion. Reviewers may not have personal or financial interests in, or be an employee, officer, director, or agent of any entity that is a registered participant in this competition, nor may they have a familial or financial relationship with an individual who is a registered Competitor.

Submission scoring will proceed as follows:

1. A panel of reviewers will consider the submission package and any associated presentation of each team.
2. The reviewers will then score each team for the quality of its approach and level of completion of the requirements outlined in the [Solar Decathlon Competition Guide](#).
3. The reviewers are tasked with determining whether or not a team has completed the minimum level of work necessary to meet the requirements of the Build Challenge Rules. The decisions from individual reviewers will then be averaged for the submission package. Final determination of winners will take reviewer scores and program policy factors listed into account.

It is expected that all teams selected as Competitors will receive an approval to proceed at each phase. Only teams that fail to complete the minimum requirements outlined in the Build Challenge Rules will not advance or receive associated prize funds.

### 4 Prize Award Eligibility During the Competition

To be eligible to win the Build Challenge, all Competitors must comply with the following eligibility requirements:

1. Competitors must be enrolled in collegiate institutions and must include a faculty advisor.
2. Only teams awarded approval to proceed in the prior phase are eligible to compete in the current phase.
3. DOE employees, DOE support service contractors, and individuals who have been employed by DOE or working for DOE as a support service contractor within six months prior to the submission deadline are not eligible to participate in any prize contests in this program.
4. Non-DOE federal entities and federal employees are also not eligible to win any prize contest in this program.

If the Prize Administrator discovers that a team or individual is not eligible to win, that team may be removed from the competition.

## 5 Additional Terms and Conditions

Submissions for Prize Awards are subject to the following terms and conditions:

- Teams must upload the required documents before the stated close date and time.
- Submissions must include all required elements. The Prize Administrator may disqualify a team's submission after an initial screening if the team fails to provide all required submission elements. Competitors may be given an opportunity to rectify submission errors if caused by technical challenges.
- Submissions must be in English and in a format readable by Microsoft Word. Scanned and/or handwritten submissions will be disqualified.
- Submissions will be disqualified if they contain any material that, at the sole discretion of DOE or NREL, is indecent, obscene, defamatory, libelous, lacking in professionalism, or demonstrates a lack of respect for people or life on this planet.
- The Prize Administrator may give Competitors an opportunity to correct non-substantive errors in submission packages, when feasible.

## 6 Teams and Single Entity Awards

The Prize Administrator will award prizes as a lump sum to the Designated Awardee for each winning team. The Designated Awardee is solely responsible for distributing prize funds among other team members as they deem appropriate. The Prize Administrator will not arbitrate, intervene, advise on, or resolve any matters among team members.

## 7 Verification for Payments

Each team shall identify a Designated Awardee qualified to receive prize payments. The Prize Administrator will verify the identity and the role of the Designated Awardee. The Prize Administrator will notify the Designated Awardee of each winning team after the date that results are announced using the email contact information provided. The Designated Awardee will be required to sign and return to the Prize Administrator a completed NREL Request for ACH Banking Information form and a completed W-9 form (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf>) within 30 days of the date the notice is sent. At the sole discretion of the Prize Administrator, a winning Competitor may be disqualified from the competition and receive no prize funds if: (i) the person/entity cannot be contacted; (ii) the Competitor/entity fails to sign and return the required documentation within the required time period; (iii) the notification is returned as undeliverable; (iv) the submission or Competitor/entity is disqualified for any other reason.

## 8 Submission Rights

By submitting materials to the Solar Decathlon, submitters agree to allow their submissions to be released to the public under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

By making a submission, and consenting to the rules of the Prize Award, a Competitor is granting to DOE, the Prize Administrator, and any other third parties supporting DOE in the contest, a license to display publicly and use the parts of the submission that are designated as

“public” for government purpose. This license includes posting or linking to the public portions of the submission on the Prize Administrator applications, including the contest website, DOE websites, and partner websites, and the inclusion of the submission in any other media, worldwide.

The submission may be viewed by DOE, the Prize Administrator, and reviewers for purposes of the contests, including but not limited to screening and evaluation purposes. The Prize Administrator and any third parties acting on their behalf will also have the right to publicize Competitor’s name and, as applicable, the names of Competitor’s team members and organization, which participated in the submission on the contest website indefinitely. By entering the Solar Decathlon Competition, Competitors represent and warrant that:

1. Competitor’s entire submission is an original work by Competitor and Competitor has not included third-party content (such as writing, text, graphics, artwork, logos, photographs, dialogue from plays, likeness of any third party, musical recordings, clips of videos, television programs or motion pictures) in or in connection with the submission, unless (i) otherwise requested by the Prize Administrator and/or disclosed by Competitor in the submission, and (ii) Competitor has either obtained the rights to use such third-party content or the content of the submission is considered in the public domain without any limitations on use;
2. Unless otherwise disclosed in the submission, the use thereof by Prize Administrator, or the exercise by Prize Administrator of any of the rights granted by the Competitor under these rules, does not and will not infringe or violate any rights of any third party or entity, including, without limitation patent, copyright, trademark, trade secret, defamation, privacy, publicity, false light, misappropriation, intentional or negligent infliction of emotional distress, confidentiality, or any contractual or other rights;
3. All persons who were engaged by the Competitor to work on the submission or who appear in the submission in any manner have: (i.) Given Competitor their express written consent to submit the submission for exhibition and other exploitation in any manner and in any and all media, whether now existing or hereafter discovered, throughout the world; (ii). Provided written permission to include their name, image or pictures in or with the submission (or if a minor who is not Competitor’s child, Competitor must have the permission of their parent or legal guardian) and Competitor may be asked by Prize Administrator to provide permission in writing;
4. Competitors have not been and are not currently under any union or guild agreement that results in any ongoing obligations resulting from the use, exhibition or other exploitation of the submission.
5. COPYRIGHT: Each Competitor represents and warrants that the Competitor is the sole author and copyright owner of the submission; that the submission is an original work of the applicant or that the applicant has acquired sufficient rights to use and to authorize others, including DOE, to use the submission, as specified throughout the rules, that the submission does not infringe upon any copyright or upon any other third-party rights of which the applicant is aware; and that the submission is free of malware.

## 9 Contest Subject to Applicable Law

All Contests are subject to all applicable federal laws and regulations. Participation constitutes each participant’s full and unconditional agreement to these official contest rules and

administrative decisions, which are final and binding in all matters related to the contest. This notice is not an obligation of funds; the final awards are contingent upon the availability of appropriations.

## **10 Resolution of Disputes**

DOE is solely responsible for administrative decisions, which are final and binding in all matters related to the contest. In the event of a dispute as to any registration, the authorized account holder of the email address used to register will be deemed to be the Competitor. The “authorized account holder” is the natural person or legal entity assigned an email address by an internet access provider, online service provider, or other organization responsible for assigning email addresses for the domain associated with the submitted address. Competitors and potential winners may be required to show proof of being the authorized account holder.

## **11 Liability**

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

## **12 Records Retention and Freedom of Information Act**

All materials submitted to DOE as part of a submission become DOE records. Any confidential commercial information contained in a submission should be designated at the time of submission. Applicants are encouraged to employ protective markings in the following manner: The cover sheet of the submission must be marked as follows and identify the specific pages containing trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential: Notice of Restriction on Disclosure and Use of Data: Pages [list applicable pages] of this document may contain trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential, and is exempt from public disclosure. Such information shall be used or disclosed only for evaluation purposes. The Government may use or disclose any information that is not appropriately marked or otherwise restricted, regardless of source. [End of Notice]

The header and footer of every page that contains trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is privileged must be marked as follows: “May contain trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential and exempt from public disclosure.” In addition, each line or paragraph containing trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential must be enclosed in brackets. Competitors will be notified of any Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests for their submissions in accordance with 29 C.F.R. § 70.26. Competitors may then have the opportunity to review materials and work with a FOIA representative prior to the release of materials.

## **13 Privacy**

Individuals and teams choosing to provide personal information by registering or completing the submission package through the contest website understand that such information will be transmitted to DOE and may be kept in a system of records. Such information will be used only to respond to you in matters regarding your submission and/or the contest unless you choose to receive updates or notifications about other contests or programs from DOE on an opt-in basis.

## **14 General Conditions**

DOE reserves the right to cancel, suspend, and/or modify the contest, or any part of it, at any time. If any fraud, technical failures, or any other factor beyond DOE's reasonable control impairs the integrity or proper functioning of the contests, as determined by DOE in its sole discretion, DOE may cancel the contest. Although DOE indicates that it will select winners to advance for each Division in the Build Challenge, DOE reserves the right to only select Competitors that are likely to achieve the goals of the program. If, in DOE's determination, no Competitors are likely to achieve the goals of the program in any given division, DOE will select no Competitors to be winners and will award no prize money. ALL DECISIONS BY DOE ARE FINAL AND BINDING IN ALL MATTERS RELATED TO THE CONTEST.

## **15 Program Policy Factors**

While the scores of the reviewers will be carefully considered, it is the role of the Prize Administrator to maximize the impact of contest funds. Some factors outside the control of Competitors and beyond the independent Reviewer's scope of review including but not limited to team geography, collegiate institution type, etc., may need to be considered to accomplish this goal.