

POWERCLERK CASE STUDY

Pennsylvania's Sunshine Solar Program successfully administered with small team and PowerClerk®

Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection uses PowerClerk to minimize administrative costs and provide fast, accurate incentive processing for their solar electric and solar hot water programs.

PA SUNSHINE SOLAR PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- \$113 million in incentives for PV and domestic solar hot water
- Averages nearly 60 applications per week, spiking as high as 200-plus applications per week
- To date, over 7,000 applications processed and more than 90 MW of PV funded through the program

PROGRAM GOALS

- Use program funds efficiently by keeping administrative costs low
- Satisfy program customers with fair and fast application processing
- Track program results for department managers and state executives

BENEFITS OF POWERCLERK

- Straightforward online application process includes checklists to reduce errors
- Real-time status updates reduce applicant call volume
- Lean administration with one full-time program specialist and two to five part-time clerical staff
- Built-in incentive calculations and communications tools enable one-day application review
- Reporting needs met with customizable, real-time reporting tools

Funding 90+ MW of Solar

The Pennsylvania Sunshine Solar Program provides rebates to help fund solar electric and solar hot water projects for homeowners and small businesses. To date, the program, which is administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP), has supported the installation of more than 70 Megawatts of completed capacity, with another 21 Megawatts in process.

"We could never have run the Pennsylvania Sunshine Solar Program with the number of staff we had without PowerClerk." Walter J. Dinda Jr., Energy Program Specialist, PADEP



Sunshine Solar Program Goals

Among the challenges PADEP faced was the uncertainty that comes with setting up any new program. During the program's planning stage, program specialists were tasked with:

- Estimating the number of expected applications, application processing time, and how that would translate into staffing requirements.
- Structuring the program to keep pace with anticipated rapid fluctuations in incoming applications and support the program's long-term needs.
- Developing an efficient application process, including keeping applicants informed of application status and supporting a high level of applicant satisfaction.
- Enabling the production of timely management reports on overall program progress.

Another goal of the program was to keep overall administrative costs low, including application processing, on-site inspections and reporting.



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“With PowerClerk, we are turning around application reviews in a day and providing our customers real-time information. Online is the only way to go.” Walter J. Dinda Jr., Energy Program Specialist , PADEP

Decision: PowerClerk

After investigating how clean energy incentive programs were being administered in other states, PADEP chose to run their program using PowerClerk®. Energy Program Specialist Walter J. Dinda Jr., was part of that process.

“We saw that PowerClerk was being used successfully in other states, and that it would meet the program’s long-term needs,” said Dinda. “PowerClerk is a great tool for contractors to submit and track their applications online, and for us to efficiently manage those applications and respond to requests for program reports in real-time.”

Teaming for Success: PADEP & PowerClerk

Since it began accepting applications in May 2009, the PA Sunshine program has processed more than 7,000 applications. During that time, they received an average 60 applications per week, with spikes as high as 200 per week occurring just before a drop in incentive level. Despite this fluctuation, the program has been effectively managed with just one full-time energy program specialist assisted by two to five part-time clerical staff. Because PowerClerk’s administrative tools are easy to learn, PADEP has been able to temporarily bring on additional staff to support high-volume periods when needed.

One feature Dinda has found especially useful is email templates, which allow PADEP to quickly send out common notifications using information that’s already in PowerClerk.

“When we were sending notices manually, each one might take 30 minutes. Now, that time has been cut in half,” explains Dinda. “Also, because contractors can view applications online, there are few calls from contractors wondering about application status.”

Automatic incentive calculations make it possible for program specialists to complete most application reviews in a single day. And PowerClerk’s reporting tools make it simple to quickly respond to department and state government requests for program statistics.

According to Dinda, “We could never have run the Pennsylvania Sunshine Solar Program with the number of staff we had without PowerClerk.”

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