



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

ROUND 5 Informational Webinar

July 13, 2021

Disclaimer: All details necessary to participate in the American Made Solar Prize program are provided in the Official Rules document online. The information provided in this presentation is not intended to amend, modify or substitute details provided in the Official Rules. Information presented should be used in conjunction with the Official Rules. In addition, any reference in presentation to any specific commercial product, process, or service, or the use of any trade, firm or corporation name is for the information and convenience of the public, and does not constitute endorsement, recommendation, or preference by the U.S. Department of Energy. Visit americanmadechallenges.org

Agenda

- Housekeeping
- Solar Prize Overview
- Eligibility
- Important Dates
- Submitting to Ready
- Utilizing the American-Made Network
- Q&A

The Solar Prize is Back!

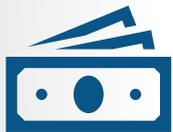


Same prize you know and love

But There's More!



With two tracks—Hardware and Software



More winners and more cash prizes



**Submission Deadline:
OCTOBER 5**



ENERGIZE

American ingenuity in solar **innovation**.



EMPOWER

innovators to rapidly transform **ideas into prototypes**.



ENGAGE

a network of labs, facilities, and partners to **prepare for market**.

PURPOSE

WHAT IS THE SOLAR PRIZE?



**Multi-million-dollar prize
competition**

Ready!, Set!, and Go! Contests

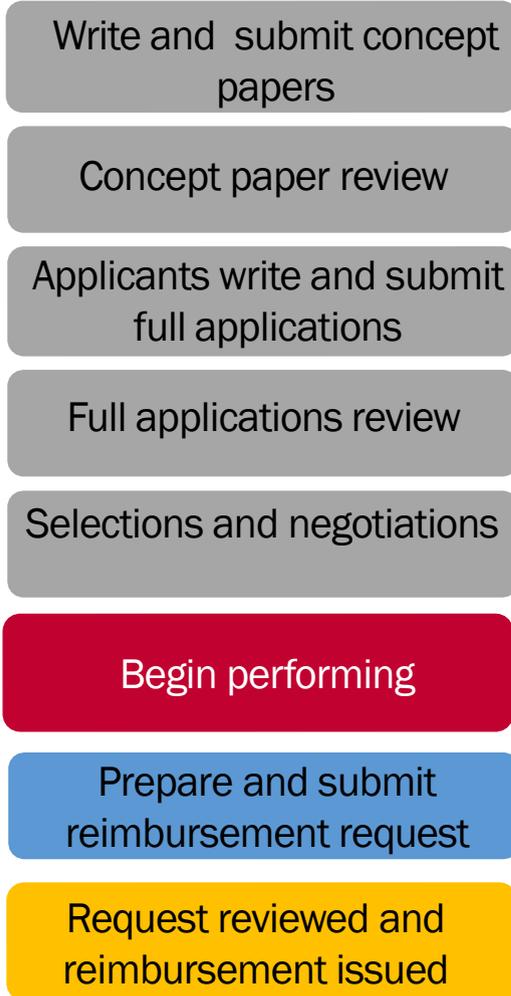


**National Network of
support organizations**

American-Made Network

Grants vs. Prizes

Financial Award Process



Prize Award Process



ENERGIZE INNOVATION IN U.S. SOLAR TECHNOLOGIES



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Two competitive tracks



Hardware Track

\$3 million prize
focused on solar
hardware components



Software Track

\$1.6 million prize
seeking new solar
software technology

ROUND **5**

SUBMIT BY OCT 5 americanmadechallenges.org/solarprize/round5

WHICH TRACK IS RIGHT FOR YOU?



ROUND **5**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY



Hardware Track

Focus on solar hardware components

- **\$3 million** in cash prizes
- **\$900,000** in support vouchers



3 Sequential Contests

READY! → SET! → GO!

20 teams
\$50,000 each

10 teams
\$100,000 each

2 teams
\$500,000 each



Software Track

Focus on solar software technologies

- **\$1.6 million** in cash prizes
- **\$100,000** in support vouchers



3 Sequential Contests

READY! → SET! → GO!

20 teams
\$30,000 each

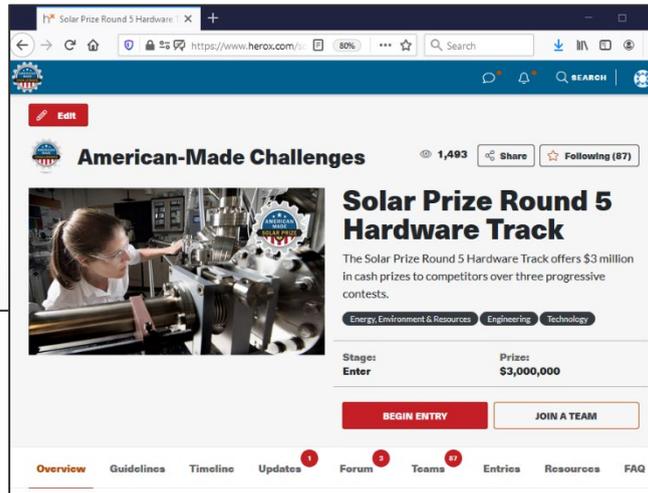
10 teams
\$60,000 each

2 teams
\$200,000 each

American-Made Network

2 Different Tracks = 2 Different Submission Paths

Hardware Track



Official Rules

American-Made Solar Prize Round 5 Hardware Track

The American-Made Solar Prize Round 5 Hardware Track is designed to accelerate and sustain American solar innovation through a series of contests, leveraging a diverse and powerful support network of national laboratories, energy incubators, and other resources across the United States.

These rules are effective June 10, 2021, for Round 5 of the Solar Prize Hardware Track

Note: These rules are different from the rules for previous Solar Prize rounds. Round 5 has two tracks that focus separately on hardware and software components. Each track (Hardware and Software) has its own rules document. Please read these rules to ensure you have the most up-to-date information and are applying to the correct program.

<https://www.herox.com/solarprizeR5hardware>

Software Track



Official Rules

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<https://www.herox.com/solarprizeR5software>

Prize Contests

Hardware Track

Make a plan to innovate
20 winners
\$50K cash each

Create a proof-of-concept
10 winners
\$100K cash + \$75K voucher each

Build a prototype & find pilot partner
2 winners
\$500K cash + \$75K voucher each

Ready!

Set!

Go!

Software Track

New software idea
20 winners
\$30K cash each

Minimum viable product
10 winners
\$60K cash each

Paying customers & business model
2 winners
\$200K cash + \$50K voucher each

Software Track – JEDI Contest

- JEDI = Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- \$300,000 additional prize funds
- Optional component
- Describe how solution addresses solar market barriers facing underserved communities and work to substantially advance their approach toward JEDI goals as they progress through the competition
- Additional funding available at each contest (Ready!, Set!, and Go!) for successful JEDI submissions
- Must win the Ready! Contest in order to win the JEDI Contest.



	JEDI Contest Winners	Prize*
Ready!	Up to 10 Ready! semifinalists	\$10,000 to \$30,000 in cash
Set!	Up to 5 Set! finalists	\$20,000 to \$60,000 in cash
Go!	Up to 1 Go! competitor	\$100,000 in cash

*Prizes are shown as funding ranges when they depend on the number of winners.

WHO?

Any U.S.-based individual or team with a desire to transform ideas into impactful new solutions

CAN COMPETE



Scientists



Students &
Faculty



Entrepreneurs



Anyone with a
BIG! idea

Eligibility Requirements

Who Can Compete:

Individuals, teams of individuals, private entities (for-profits and nonprofits), and nonfederal government entities (such as states, counties, tribes, municipalities, and academic institutions) are eligible to compete in the Ready! Contest.

- Individual Competitor – Must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident
- Group of Individuals – Online account holder must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident
- Private Entities – Incorporated in and maintain primary place of business in the U.S.
- Academic Institutions – Must be based in the U.S.

[Refer to the Official Rules for the complete eligibility requirements.](#)

Note: For the Set! and Go! Contests, competitors must be a for-profit business entity.

Important Dates

Now!

Follow the Challenge on HeroX and start working

October 5, 2021, at 5 p.m. ET

Last day to complete a submission for the Ready! Contest



Submitting to the Ready! Contest

Contest Goal

New and Innovative Ideas



HARDWARE TRACK

Rapidly transform an important problem from a conceptual solution to a plan for building a proof-of-concept.

SOFTWARE TRACK

Rapidly develop an idea for a new software solution that can address a critical need in the solar industry; propose a conceptual solution and a plan for building a minimum viable product that has broad solar market potential.

Read the Rules

Hardware Track:

https://americanmadechallenges.org/solarprize/docs/rules/r5/American-Made_Solar_Prize_Rules_Hardware.pdf

Software Track:

https://americanmadechallenges.org/solarprize/docs/rules/r5/American-Made_Solar_Prize_Rules_Software.pdf



Official Rules

American-Made Solar Prize Round 5

Hardware Track

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How to Get Ready

Problem-Solution Fit

- Develop a credible solution concept to a real-world problem
- Perform due diligence to validate that the proposed solution technical potentials and market feasibility

Team Capabilities

- Form and build an exceptional and committed team

Network Engagement

- Cultivate relationships with innovation networks to help maximize the likelihood of success.



What to Submit by October 5

1. 90-second video (public)
2. Cover page content
3. Narrative answers to four questions about the Problem, Solution, Team, and Plan (2,500 words)
Software Track – Optional JEDI responses
4. Technical assistance request (export from Network Matching Tool)
5. Summary PowerPoint slide (public)
6. Letters of commitment or support (optional).



American-Made Solar Prize
Hardware Track
SUBMISSION FOR READY!

PROJECT NAME
Innovation tagline (e.g., your mission in a few words)
Keyword tags

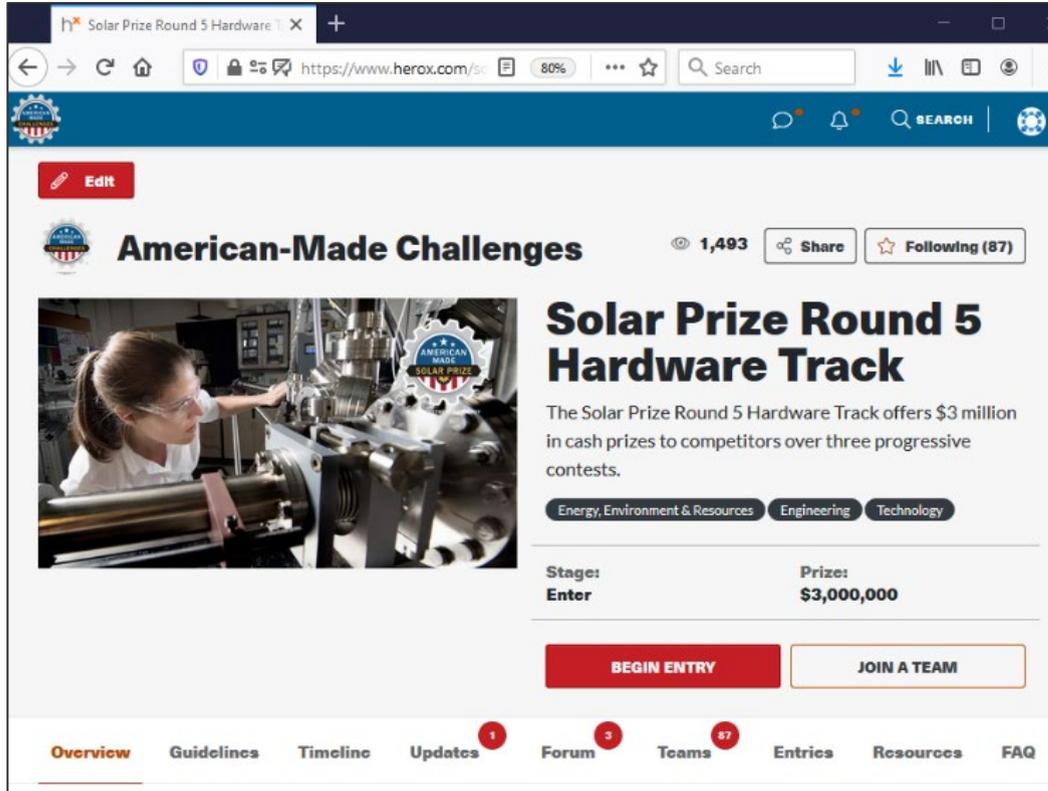
TEAM
Names, geographic locations, contact info, and LinkedIn profiles

PARTNERS AND AMERICAN-MADE NETWORK
Key project partners and organizations (if any)

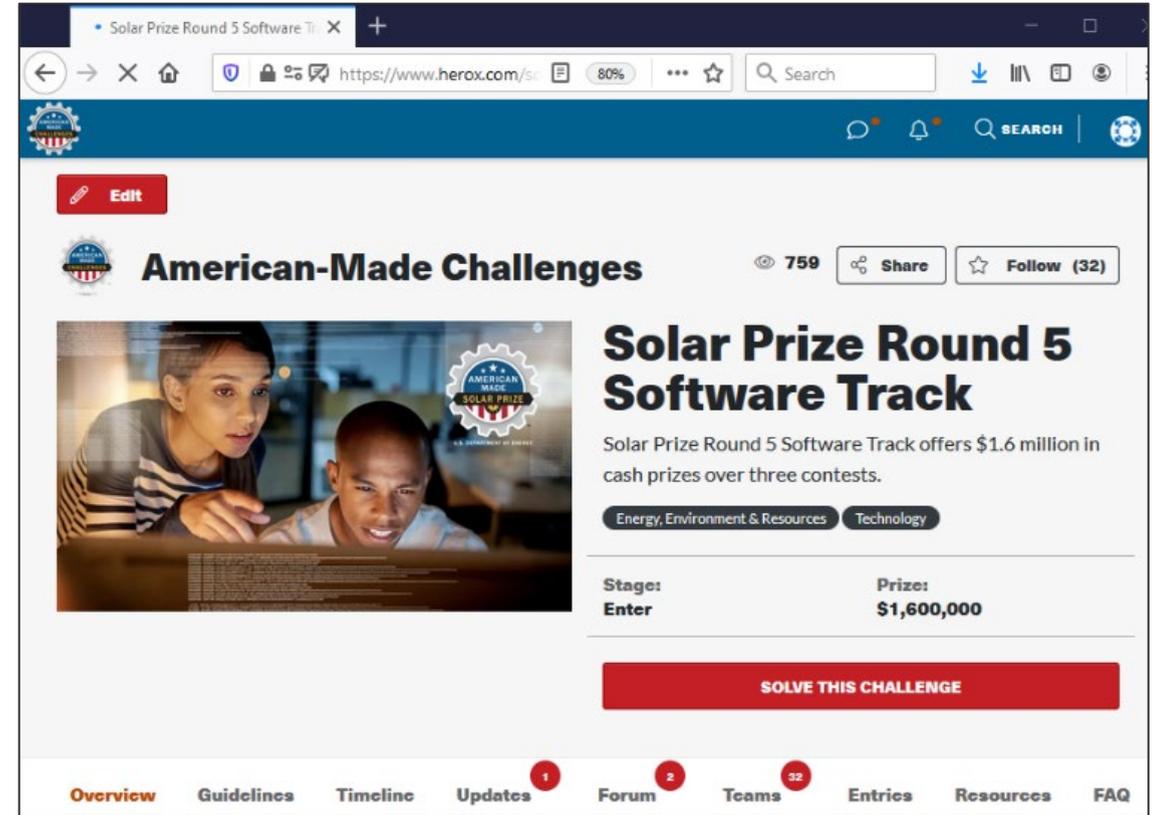
The Connectors that significantly helped you advance your solution and the major items they helped with (if applicable)

[Link to your video](#)

Submit on the HeroX Platform



<https://www.herox.com/solarprizeR5hardware>



<https://www.herox.com/solarprizeR5software>

Video – Your Innovation in 90 Seconds

Suggested content:

- The real-world problem you are solving
- Your solution and why it's transformational
- Who you are and why you have a competitive edge

Reviewers will consider these criteria:

- The video explains a compelling real-world problem
- The video describes a unique innovation that is feasible in few years
- The video shows a knowledgeable and skillful team.



TIPS and TRICKS

- This is your first impression
- Be creative and focus on content
- Watch previous winners' videos
- Get feedback before you post online

Technical Narrative – Four Questions

1. **Problem** – What is the problem and why is solving it important?
2. **Solution** – What is your solution, and why will it be successful?
3. **Accomplishments and Team** – What have you done to date and what qualities give you a competitive edge?
4. **Plan** – What is your plan to achieve your goals

Note: Software Track also has optional JEDI components

Word Limit: 2,500 words

+ JEDI Contest – 500 extra words)

+ 5 images or figures



TIPS and TRICKS

- Remember your audience
- Be specific (this portion isn't public)
- Pay attention to the word count

Reviewing the Submissions

Question 1: *Problem* – What is the problem and why is solving it important?

Suggested content you provide

- Describe the problem, quantify its significance with metrics, and explain why now is the right time to solve it. Be specific to the problem space that your innovation addresses.
- Explain why existing solutions are inadequate. Be as technically specific as possible to your innovation area, providing examples where possible.
- Show how you know this is a significant problem using evidence-based validation (e.g., interviews with users, case studies, literature).

Each statement is scored on a 1–6 scale

- The competitor quantifies a critical problem using important metrics and a compelling analysis of why now is the right time to address it.
- The competitor’s assessment of current solutions and their limitations shows a comprehensive understanding of the problem-solution space.
- The competitor uses real-world evidence to validate key assumptions about the industry need.

Technical Assistance Request

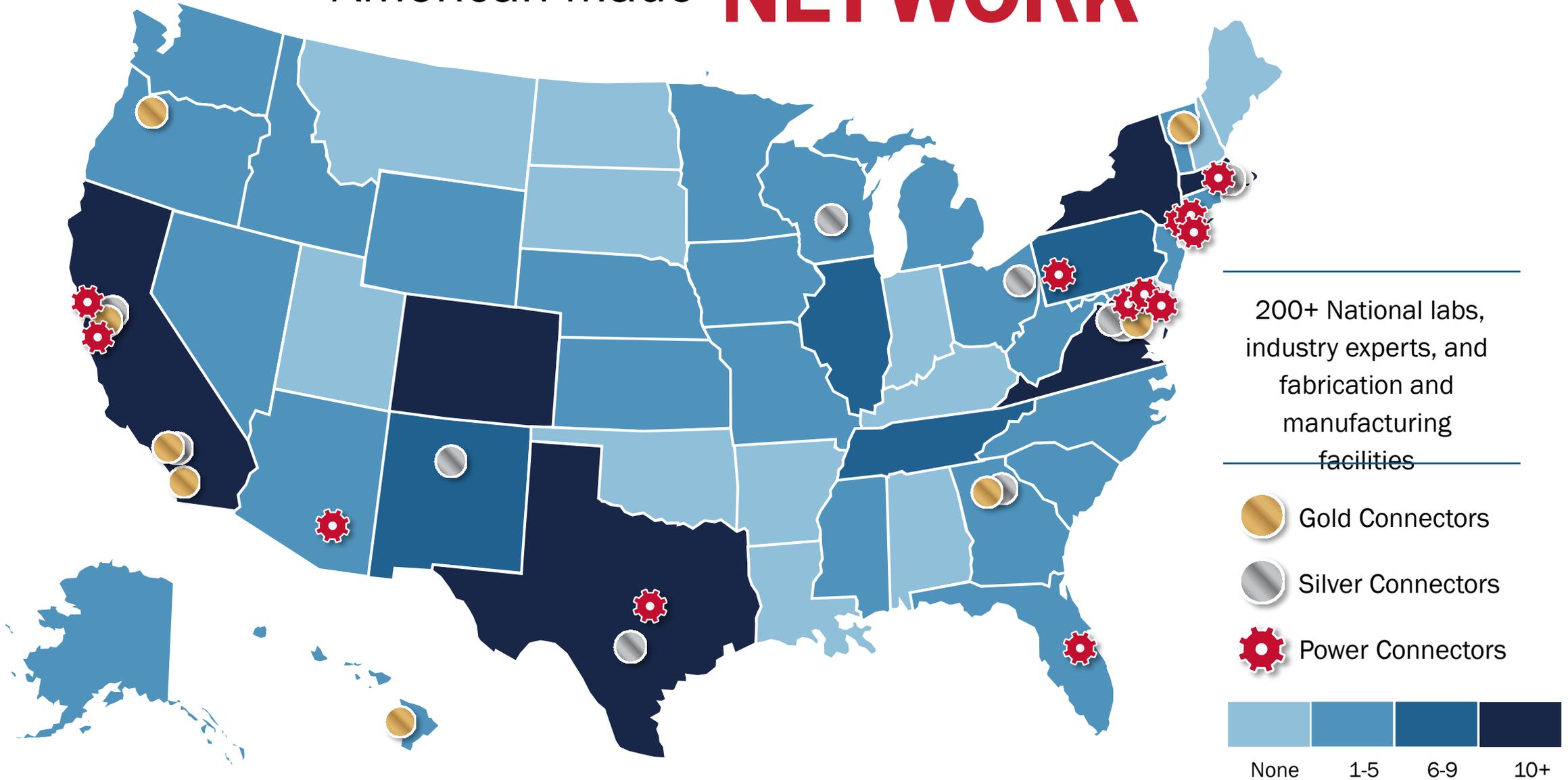
- Opportunity to identify the areas where you need assistance to realize your solution.
- Use the new American-Made Network Matching Tool to generate your request
- Take the opportunity to connect with organizations that can help you be successful
- Format – must be exported from the American-Made Network Matching Tool.

<https://network.americanmadechallenges.org/>



American-Made Network

American-Made NETWORK



Connectors are Rewarded

- \$345,000 of Recognition Rewards available
- \$120,000 available during the Ready! Contest
- You MUST list the Connector on your submission
- Connector MUST be an approved member of the American-Made Network

Reward Name	Anticipated #	Hardware \$	Software \$	Details
Mobilize	Up to 1 per winning competitor	\$5,000	\$1,000	Distributed to Connectors who recruit and/or support competitors who go on to win the Ready! Contest

Other Opportunities for Connectors:

- ACCEerator Challenge
- Recruitment Prize
- Contact AMN@nrel.gov

https://americanmadechallenges.org/solarprize/docs/guidelines/r5/American-Made_Solar_Prize_Guidelines_for_Connector_Recognition_Rewards.pdf

How Do I Find and Connect with a Connector?

Through the Network Matching Tool (also where you generate your TAR)

<https://network.americanmadechallenges.org/>

The screenshot displays the 'American-Made Challenges' website interface. On the left, a 'Setup your profile' sidebar is visible, showing a progress bar at step 1 and a form for entering a name (kimberlee.ott), a nickname, and a biography. The main content area is titled 'Network' and includes a 'Browse the Network' button and tabs for 'Matches', 'Followers [0]', and 'Following [0]'. Below these, a message prompts users to sign in to start building their network. Three user profiles are listed: Jay Murray (Idea Foundry), Jackson May (Positive Deviancy), and Faith Kelnhofer (Greentown Labs), each with a 'Connector' badge and a list of capabilities. On the right, a 'Challenges' section features a 'Solar Prize Round 5 - Hardware Track' challenge, marked as a 'Featured Challenge' with a star icon, and includes a 'View Challenge' button. The interface is dark-themed with white and light blue text.

Want Even More Help? Reach Out to a Power Connector

Carnegie Mellon University

Wilton E. Scott Institute
for Energy Innovation



For the JEDI Contest specifically:



What's Next?

1. Follow the challenges on HeroX
<https://www.herox.com/solarprizeR5hardware>
<https://www.herox.com/solarprizeR5software>
1. Read the rules
[https://americanmadechallenges.org/solarprize/docs/rules/r5/American-Made Solar Prize Rules Hardware.pdf](https://americanmadechallenges.org/solarprize/docs/rules/r5/American-Made%20Solar%20Prize%20Rules%20Hardware.pdf)
[https://americanmadechallenges.org/solarprize/docs/rules/r5/American-Made Solar Prize Rules Software.pdf](https://americanmadechallenges.org/solarprize/docs/rules/r5/American-Made%20Solar%20Prize%20Rules%20Software.pdf)
2. Sign up in the Matching Tool and connect
<https://network.americanmadechallenges.org/>
1. Start innovating
2. Apply by **October 5.**



QUESTIONS?

Email: solar.prize@nrel.gov



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

www.americanmadechallenges.org/solarprize