



**For immediate release**

**GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic launches effort to increase opportunities for women in the solar industry**

*Women's installation event, in partnership with SEIA, kicks off GRID's Women in Solar Program in D.C.*

**WASHINGTON, DC; May 20, 2017** – To increase gender diversity in the local solar industry, [GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic](#), a nonprofit organization that makes solar power and job training accessible to underserved communities, is hosting its first all-women's solar build today in the District. This "We Build" event, sponsored by the [Solar Energy Industries Association \(SEIA\)](#), marks the local launch of [GRID's national Women in Solar Program](#), an effort to build a diverse, equitable and inclusive solar industry by providing pathways to technical careers for women, highlighting the voices of women of color in the industry, and providing national leadership on solar workforce diversity.

"Being able to participate in today's We Build means a lot to me both personally and professionally," said Abigail Ross Hopper, SEIA's president and CEO. "Expanding diversity within our industry and customer base continues to be one of my top priorities. The benefits solar provides, both through well-paying jobs and cleaner air, deserve to be enjoyed by everyone - gender, race, socioeconomic class aside. Through initiatives like this one, our industry is leading the way to a more inclusive society."

This inaugural We Build event will take place at Bernice Rink's home, a single woman living on a fixed income. Bernice admits living on a fixed income by herself is a struggle. Thanks to the 2.85kW solar system installed by the We Build crew, Ms. Rink will soon save \$570 annually, making a large impact in her ability to save in the long-term.

Solar jobs are growing by 20 percent a year, and women's voices, talents, and leadership are needed more than ever to build a strong and sustainable industry. Women make up 28 percent of the solar workforce, according to The Solar Foundation's 2016 National Solar Jobs Census, and although this proportion is growing, more opportunities need to be cultivated to engage women and enhance their professional development. GRID Alternatives' National Women in Solar Program creates an intentional space to support women's advancement in the solar industry.

"Our mission at GRID is to make this new clean economy accessible to everyone. As part of that mission, we strive to connect individuals of diverse backgrounds, races, and genders to training and career opportunities," says Nicole Steele, Executive Director of GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic, "We Build is all about providing women a platform to network and advance within the solar industry."

For more information about [We Build, visit the GRID Alternatives website.](#)

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**About GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic**

GRID Alternatives Mid-Atlantic is an affiliate of GRID Alternatives, America's largest nonprofit solar installer, bringing clean energy technology and job training to underserved communities. GRID Alternatives has installed 8,519 solar electric systems for low-income households to-date, with a combined installed capacity of 31MW, saving \$250 million in lifetime electricity costs and preventing 678,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions. 32,000 people have also received training through the program. For more information, visit [www.gridalternatives.org/midatlantic](http://www.gridalternatives.org/midatlantic).

**About SEIA**

Celebrating its 43rd anniversary in 2017, the Solar Energy Industries Association® is the national trade association of the U.S. solar energy industry, which now employs more than 260,000 Americans. Through advocacy and education, SEIA® is building a strong solar industry to power America. SEIA works with its 1,000 member companies to build jobs and diversity, champion the use of cost-competitive solar in America, remove market barriers and educate the public on the benefits of solar energy. Visit SEIA online at [www.seia.org](http://www.seia.org).

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