



Mini-grants to be awarded at May 9 SWVA Solar Fair at UVa-Wise for a Solar in Your School effort

\$500 awards given for creative solar applications!

The Solar Workgroup of Southwest Virginia is hosting a SWVA Solar Fair on May 9, 2017 from 5-7 pm at the UVa-Wise Convocation Center in Wise, Virginia. The Solar Fair will feature music with the Empty Bottle String Band, food and demonstrations, a Solarize SWVA program kick-off, a solar powered inflatable, and a mini-grants competition for students in middle and high school throughout the region.

Two \$500 mini-grants grants will be awarded to teams of students to develop a plan for a “**Solar in Your School**” project. The competition is open to middle and high school students (including 4-H and homeschool students) in the counties of Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Tazewell, Wise and the city of Norton.

Projects may include tangible projects that could be constructed with the \$500 budget (such as constructing a solar oven or a solar-powered robot), or funding could be used as seed money to secure additional funding for larger project. Adult mentors should be included as part of the project team.

Additional solar opportunities are available as well! Classes, clubs, or homeschool groups doing self-led solar projects or do-it-yourself solar activities are also encouraged to share their work at the Solar Fair. Sample projects include building a simple [solar oven](#)¹, a more [complex solar oven](#)² or a [solar car](#)³ (links provided for reference; other solar DIY ideas are welcome). For school groups seeking additional involvement, the Solar Fair planning team can send a representative along with free materials to classrooms for a hands-on lesson building mini-solar ovens with students if of interest. Materials can be provided by the Solar Workgroup for select projects. Educators may send inquiries to lydia@appvoices.org or call (276) 679-1691 for additional information.

Project Guidelines

To be considered for the Solar in Your School effort, please submit a project overview with following the guidelines. The deadline for submissions is 5:00 pm on April 26th, 2017.

¹ <https://www.homesciencetools.com/a/build-a-solar-oven-project>

² <http://solarcooking.org/plans/>

³ <http://www.instructables.com/id/DIY-Mini-Solar-Car-14kph-Ultrafast-Toy/>

Submissions can be sent electronically to Lydia@appvoices.org or mailed to 816 Park Ave NW, Norton VA, 24273, attention Lydia Graves. Submissions may be up to 10 pages with both text and illustrations, and should be submitted as a PDF document. Submissions should include a project overview, steps for project development, a list of partners, a faculty or adult mentor, and a budget for additional funding needed (if developing a plan for a project).

At least one member of the team must be able to attend and give a 3-5 minute presentation about their project during the May 9 Solar Fair. Project Proposals should also include a plan for implementation (such as plan development) or construction (such as building a solar oven) between May 10 and November 15, 2017. Faculty or adult members must be able to play an active role in the project development, and technical assistance for project development is available through Appalachian Voices upon request.

Proposals will be evaluated on the following **criteria**:

- Does the project creatively apply solar technology to meet a need on campus or in the community?
- Is there commitment of responsible adult/faculty mentor for the duration of the project?
- Does the project engage more students or community members beyond the project team or have other “ripple effect” impacts?
- Is the project realistic and have a high likelihood of success? Is there a “Plan B” in the event of setbacks?
- Is there a clear plan of how the project will be completed within the given timeframe (for implementation by November 15, 2017)?
- Is the proposal well written and does it clearly address the above questions?

For questions or additional information, contact Lydia Graves at (276) 679-1691 or lydia@appvoices.org. The Solar Fair will be held at the Prior Convocation Center at UVa-Wise at 437 Stadium Drive in Wise, VA. For more information, see the website: www.swvasolar.org