Solar Project Manager

Job Description

Love the idea of turning sunlight into electricity? As a Solar Project Manager, you get to lead the journey! You **plan and coordinate solar projects from start to finish**—making sure everything from designs to permits to installation runs smoothly. You'll work with electricians, homeowners, and business owners, **solving problems along the way** and helping people understand **how their solar systems work**. Basically, you make clean energy happen!

Salary

WA Average
Entry — $77,800
Middle — $112,000
Top — $134,000

Core Tasks

- **Designing** solar systems and **creating layouts** for homes and businesses.
- **Coordinating** permits and approvals with the city and utility.
- **Ordering** equipment, **scheduling**, and **communicating** with customers throughout the project.
- Working alongside electricians during solar installations to **ensure smooth execution**.

Workplace / Environment

- Work hours
  Approx. 40+ hours/week
  (At key milestones overtime work may be required to meet deadlines)
- Environment
  Primarily office-based, focusing on **design work**, **permitting**, **equipment** orders, and **scheduling**.
- Travel
  In the field, **meets** with homeowners or business owners and **works alongside electricians** during installations.

Education / Prerequisites

Education Level
Typically Bachelors in engineering, construction management or related field

Licensing
No solar/electrical license. Coordinates with licensed electricians. Background in science and electronics.

Pre-Job Preparation
Typically 3-5 years as a project manager in the solar or renewable energy field.

Soft Skills
- Problem-solving
- Customer communication
- Flexibility with schedules
- Team collaboration (utility, city, installers, electricians)
- Detail orientation in managing projects

Technical Skills
- Solar system design and layouts
- Permitting and utility coordination
- Equipment ordering and scheduling
- Installation coordination with electricians
- Project planning from start to finish

Career Path: Krista Myers

About Me

Project Manager at Cascadia Solar

BS in Geology – UC Santa Cruz; Masters from Louisiana State University

High School Life

"I was in high school, I was a **decent student**, not a straight-A student by any means. I always liked **science** and **math** more than English and other classes, so I took a few AP classes, including **calculus** and **environmental science**. **Calculus** was pretty difficult, so I had a tutor that helped me after school and would go see teachers for extra help. In 11th grade, **astronomy week in physics class** really changed everything for me. Learning about **planets**, **planetary formation**, the **universe**, and how small we are just blew my mind and made me want to **study astrophysics** in college."

College Choices

"I applied to college as an **astrophysics major** because I thought I wanted to be an astronomer or astrophysicist. I went to **UC Santa Cruz**, a beautiful campus in the redwoods by the ocean. After about a year, I realized astrophysics was mostly physics and less astronomy, so I changed to **Earth and Planetary Science**, earning my Bachelor's of Science degree. My favorite classes were field geology, going out into the **mountains**, **desert**, or **coast to map** rock units, **formations**, and **faults**. In my third year of college, my professor invited me to join his research lab, studying **Antarctica** and **glacial seismology (ice quakes)**, which changed my career path. Later, I pursued a **Master's focused on Antarctic climate research**."

Into the Real World

"When I first started working in the research lab in college, I had never even seen a **glacier**. After working in the research lab for about a year and a half, he asked me to go to **Alaska** for field work. That was the best day of my life up to that point! I spent the summer doing research, then stayed as a glacier guide on the **Matanuska Glacier**.

In graduate school, I continued **Antarctic climate research**, studying meteorology and limnology (the study of lakes). Opportunities in the lab, Alaska, and Antarctica showed me how research and field work opened doors, even in unexpected directions. After graduate school, I realized I didn't want to stay in academia forever. I wanted to take more direct action on climate change and started to learn about renewable energy. That led me to **solar**, where I could see the impact every day, **planning** and **coordinating** projects, **designing** systems, **managing** permits, and working with homeowners, businesses, and electricians."

About My Job

"Every project is different; there's always something new to learn"

Pros

- "It's really **interesting**, if you like **understanding** how things actually work together, and how to **make something** happen."
- "I get to understand **residential** and **commercial** electrical systems a lot deeper than I ever thought I would."
- "I have **good work life balance** because that's something I feel strongly about maintaining."
- "I really like that I'm just **constantly learning** things, it's never boring."
- "I'm always doing something **different**. It doesn't feel too repetitive."

Cons

- "They do call it the **solar coaster** for a reason, that it does **ebb and flow**."
- "Next year, in 2026 we don't really know what the solar industry is going to look like. There is a **tax incentive thats going away**."
- "As someone that didn't start in this field, there was a lot of **on-the-job training** and **learning**."
- "You're just **bombarded** with, new ways of thinking, new equipment, new **technical knowledge** that you have to **grasp** and **learn**."

Fieldwork

- "I'll go out to their home, look at their **electrical panel**, look at **their roof, take measurements**, and come up with a **plan** with the homeowner."
- "When I'm out in the field, I'm usually talking to the customer, **understanding the building, their budget, why they're getting solar**, and their energy usage."
- "I do **go out to the job site after the job is complete** to do a final walk through, show the home owner how to operate the system, and understand the components."

Office Work

- "I **design** and also **manage** the projects for residential and commercial solar systems. "
- "I'm getting all the **permits**, doing all the **planning**, **buying** all the equipment, figuring out what equipment works together for that job."
- "I **talk to the customer** about what they're after, why they're getting solar, and then come up with a **plan that fits their needs**."
- "I'm usually in the office **supporting** the electricians, **keeping in touch** with the homeowner, letting them know the **schedule**, making sure everything's going to arrive on time."

Skills

- "**Figuring out** what equipment works together, and then making sure that **electricians have everything they need**."
- "Bridging the gap between the complicated electronics that go into the solar system and **communicating it to the customer** in a way that they can understand."
- "I **explain things clearly**, answer any questions they have as far as what to expect, warranties etc."
- "Schedules are always moving around, so we always have to be **flexible**. **You're always thinking on your feet."**

Education/Experience

- "As someone that didn't start in this field, there was a lot of **on-the-job training and learning**."
- **"**The first 6 months it was like drinking from a fire hose."
- "**Bachelor's in Geology**, UC Santa Cruz; Master's focused on Antarctic climate research."
- "Shifted from **research and academics** to **on-the-ground clean energy** work."
- "My background in research focused on using **electronics for data collection**, so I had skills and knowledge that carried over."
- "You **don't have to have every single skill** when applying to jobs"

The Future of the **Solar Industry**

"Making clean energy accessible and beneficial for everyone is my goal."

"Something that I'm really excited about in the future is doing more work with **solar projects that are involved with nonprofits and other community groups and grant projects** specifically, so bringing solar to more than just, you know, the homeowners that can afford it, but actually **making solar and battery backup accessible and beneficial to more people**."

"When we're doing the interview in September 2025 it's a really busy time for solar because there's a 30% tax credit that's ending. It's a financial incentive, for people to install solar, and that's going away because the federal government decided to get rid of that. Next year, in **2026 we don't really know what the solar industry is going to look like.** I think a lot of people in this space are a little worried about their jobs and their companies. It's a little bit of a uncertain time, but the **truth is that solar is unstoppable at this point.** It's one of the cheapest forms of energy out there. It's cheaper than using fossil fuels. Just from an economic standpoint, I think that solar is going to be super popular continuing into the future. They do call it the "**solar coaster" for a reason, as it ebbs and flows**.

About Sustainability Ambassadors

We are here to ***RAPIDLY ADVANCE A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.*** Empowering ***YOUTH*** to catalyze community sustainability, ***TEACHERS*** to integrate rigor with relevance for real-world impact, ***COMMUNITY*** to drive collective impact.

We support a year-round training program for over 60 highly motivated middle and high school youth, a Teacher Fellows Program, City-County CAP internships, and college-level interns, and work with hundreds of educators to design new models of problem-based, place-based learning around ***a shared vision of educating for sustainability.***

Your Green Jobs Future

Ready to explore your future in green jobs? Use ***Map your Career*** to map your trajectory!

Find career opportunities near you now! Use ***Career Connect - Washington's*** tool to find programs to build your career skills.

Interested in a future in solar? Take a look at the ***Solar Jobs Census*** to track solar job growth nationwide.

Explore ***RVC's opportunities*** to work with organizations led by communities of color.

Dive into the ***Center of Excellence for Clean Energy's*** robust career tools in the sustainable energy sector.

Grow your professional sustainability skillset with the ***Seattle Youth Good Program.***

See Seattle's ***Clean Energy Resources Map*** to examine what the city is planning for a greener energy future.

Check out the ***U.S. Green Building Council*** to explore the sector's current opportunities. :

Funder Acknowledgement

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CASCADE WATER ALLIANCE

King County
Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Wastewater Treatment Division