Engaging over 1,000 students annually, the Queens Public Library hosts a series of afterschool educational programs related to renewable energy for children and teenagers between the ages of 8 and 18. In each 90-minute session, Solar One educators lead and demonstrate one of a number of workshops, including Energy Transfer Lab, Building Batteries, Wind Turbine Design Lab, Building Solar Race Cars, and Energy Audit Watt Game, to provide hands-on experience while enhancing students’ STEM skills.

Because the NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) funds this program, representatives from DCAS attended the ‘Building a Solar Race Car’ workshop on Friday, February 22nd, and were pleased to see that the class attracted a broad and racially diverse cross-section of New York City students. Participants were very happy to build and decorate their solar cars and couldn’t wait for a sunny day to test their new inventions. Students were also taught how to switch the cables of their newly built engine from solar power to batteries, so the cars could still run on cloudy days. Concepts of solar power and battery storage were both explored and put into practice during the class, making this a rewarding and effective educational experience.

Since 2018, DCAS has been working with the Queens Public Library and Solar One to offer a total of 60 workshops per academic year. We hope to continue growing this partnership to promote diversity and equality in the development of a local green workforce for future generations.