

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Community Solar



With local solar, you can decrease your electricity costs by up to 10% annually and help reduce carbon emissions.

What is community solar?

Community solar (or local solar) allows utility customers (including members of community choice aggregation programs) to support local solar power and save on annual electricity costs without having to install solar panels.

Why should I enroll?

Approximately 50% of all homes are unable to host solar panels. Community solar empowers homeowners, renters, and small businesses to easily tap into the benefits of solar.

Sign up for local solar to:

1. Lower your electricity bill by up to 10% annually
2. Support clean, renewable energy generation
3. Raise funds towards a local sustainability project

How does community solar work?

You subscribe to a shared solar farm that feeds clean solar energy into the utility grid. Your solar farm share generates credits that appear on your utility bill, reducing your amount due. Our community solar partner (the solar farm owner) bills you for a percentage of the credits, as indicated in your subscriber agreement, generated by your share of the solar farm.

How do I save with community solar?

Your solar farm share is sized so that the electricity generated by your share approximately matches your annual electricity usage. The credits generated by your farm share are applied to your utility bill, reducing your monthly payment to the utility. Our

community solar partner bills you for the credits at a set discount, per your subscriber agreement, saving you money.

How is my solar allocation determined?

Your solar allocation will be estimated to offset most of your typical annual electricity usage. So, your allocation should roughly match your annual consumption.

Is there a penalty for canceling my subscription?

No. There are no penalties or termination fees. Should you choose to leave the program, please allow up to 90 days for the cancellation to take effect.

How does community choice aggregation (CCA) work with community solar?

CCA and community solar programs work together to reduce both electricity costs and carbon emissions, even more than either program does on its own. CCA is a statewide initiative that allows municipalities to pool local electricity demand in order to negotiate lower electricity rates and better terms on behalf of their residents. CCA also empowers municipalities to designate generation sources— including renewable energy. Community solar requires active enrollment and may be layered on top of CCA to maximize electricity bill savings or implemented without CCA. Community solar also supports the creation of local renewable generation infrastructure.



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What is a solar credit?

As a result of New York State incentives for clean energy generation, credits are issued when electricity is produced from a clean, renewable source. A credit is created every time a renewable power producer creates a unit of energy. A solar credit specifies solar-generated energy. By signing up for community solar, you're supporting renewable energy generation. In turn, you receive solar bill credits for your allocation of the solar-generated energy that is fed into the grid to be delivered by the utility. Over the course of a year, the credits more than offset your supply cost (what you pay for electricity). Therefore, you end up spending less for cleaner energy generated from renewable sources.

Do I earn the same number of credits every month?

Subscribers pay for credits based on how much their solar farm share generates. This means that in the summer, you may receive more credits than you need; while in the winter, you may receive fewer credits than needed to offset your utility bill. The utility bill credits belong to you, and you can use the rollover credits earned during the summer to offset electricity costs in the winter. Your share of the solar farm is allocated so that, at the end of the year, the amount of power is generated for the grid approximately matches what you need to offset your annual electricity consumption.

How will I be billed?

Each month, you'll receive two bills—one from your utility and one from the solar project manager. Your utility bills you for the electricity you use less the solar credits generated by your solar farm share. Your utility will bill you for only a set percentage of the credit value (as specified in your contract). You save the difference!

Does this mean I no longer receive power from my current energy supplier?

No. Your current energy supplier continues to produce your electricity (this may be your local utility or an electricity supply company (ESCO) and your local utility remains responsible for repairs, maintenance, and customer service. The solar farm simply feeds energy into the grid to be delivered by the utility.

Do I have to switch my utility or my energy supplier?

No. If you are purchasing power through a CCA or from a third-party energy supplier (i.e., ESCO), you may continue to do so and still subscribe to a community solar farm. Enrolling in community solar is a good way to reduce your electricity costs without impacting your relationship with your existing energy supplier.

Am I eligible to enroll?

Most residential or small business utility customers are eligible to enroll. Those with their own solar panels are not eligible.

Can I enroll my business?

Yes. Commercial customers are eligible unless they are so large that they pay demand charges (these charges would be listed on your utility bill).

I'm not a part of a CCA, can I still participate?

Yes. You may sign up for community solar, regardless of whether you participate in a CCA program. Please visit joulecommunitypower.com to determine if we offer a local solar program in your community.

