

Community Solar

Since our beginnings, Tribes and Indigenous communities have recognized our sun as deserving of perpetual reverence and respect for providing life to our communities, plants, animals, and everything we depend upon. As we continue navigating current energy development and its impacts, the sun through community solar provides an opportunity to restore a healthy, interdependent, and clean energy stewardship paradigm while promoting Tribal energy sovereignty and economic empowerment.

Why solar?

A Tribe's transition to solar power represents more than just a shift towards renewable energy—it is a reaffirmation of sovereignty and self-determination. By taking steps to take control of our energy futures, Tribes across Indian Country are reclaiming autonomy from fossil fuel dependence and external, non-Tribal energy providers. Rather, community solar projects can be designed by the Tribe to meet the Tribe's goals of sovereignty, economic and financial self-sufficiency, grid resiliency, and ensuring projects are not placed in culturally significant areas.

Further, community solar installations not only reduce reliance on environmentally harmful energy development practices but also create opportunities for economic development and job creation on Tribal lands.

What is community solar?

Community solar is an affordable way for Tribal communities, renters and homeowners, local businesses, farmers, schools, and others to go solar.

Participants of a community solar array are often called “subscribers,” and a single community solar array can provide power for a mix of different subscribers. One project could provide power to a Tribal administration building, education center, health clinic, casino, and residences.

Through this program, subscribers can expect 10-20% in savings on their utility bills. Those who join a community solar program by subscribing to the facility have access to the electricity created by a shared solar array within or near a community, offering access to clean energy without individual rooftop installations.

Benefits

- The benefits of community solar could be different for each Tribe. Community solar could promote Tribal energy sovereignty through various ways, including economic development and income generation, electric bill savings for the Tribe and Tribal members, workforce development, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Bring community members together to benefit from a shared resource.
- Generate economic development and safe, well-paying jobs locally.
- Lower energy costs for Tribal administration buildings and Tribal members through reliable, clean energy.

Community Solar

STEP 1:

A community solar project is installed and generates clean energy.

STEP 2:

Individuals, local businesses, schools, apartment buildings, Tribal government buildings, and others subscribe to the solar program and receive energy from the community solar panels.

STEP 3:

Each community solar subscriber receives a savings credit on their electric bill based on the amount of solar energy produced.

STEP 4:

Community solar lowers energy bills, advances Tribal sovereignty, and promotes electric resilience on Tribal land.

