

FACT SHEET

# Community Solar in Indiana

Community solar is expanding nationwide, offering clean, renewable, and affordable energy access to all. However, in Indiana, this option is unavailable to utility customers. Why? Indiana legislators haven't yet passed the necessary legislation mandating large, investor-owned utilities to permit independent community solar projects on their grid.

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Faith in Place, as a founding member of the Hoosiers for Community Solar Coalition is collaborating with coalition partners across our state. Our aim is to ensure the advantages of solar energy reach everyone in Indiana by enabling utility customers to subscribe to independently owned community solar projects. Learn more: <http://hoosiersforcommunitysolar.com/get-involved>

## How Does Community Solar Work?

Community solar is a system that allows households, businesses, houses of worship, schools, local governments, and others to join a nearby, independently (non-utility) owned solar panel project. Participants subscribe to this project and the electricity produced by the solar system is integrated into the utility grid. Subscribers receive a credit on their utility bill corresponding to the electricity generated by their share.

Community solar is a great option for consumers who cannot, or don't want to, install solar panels on their roof or property, for any number of reasons, including:

- They rent or lease their property, live in a multifamily building, or are restricted by a home-owners association.
- They cannot afford the high upfront costs of installing a solar voltaic system.
- They have a roof unsuitable for solar, because, for example, it is shaded by trees or doesn't have the right size or slope.

Community solar projects are smaller than utility scale systems, so they can be built anywhere, for example on:

- Abandoned industrial sites and parking lots.
- Rooftops of large warehouses, stores, industrial buildings, or municipal buildings.
- Unused agricultural land.

## Benefits of Community Solar

- **CHOICE:** Community solar provides new choices for Hoosiers who want to be part of the transition to an affordable, clean, renewable, and climate-friendly source of energy – regardless of whether they can host solar on their own property.
- **HEALTH:** Indiana tops the charts for asthma and other health conditions related to poor air and water quality. That’s in part because we are still dependent on fossil fuels that pollute the air and poison our water. The quicker we can transition to clean energy sources, the healthier our communities will be.
- **SAVINGS:** Subscribers to independently owned and well-structured community solar projects can expect savings on their electric bills.
- **PRIVATE INVESTMENT MEETING INCREASING DEMAND FOR CLEAN ENERGY:** Community solar could greatly expand private, non-utility investments in solar energy in Indiana, helping to meet the rising demand for clean, green energy needed to power electric cars, highly efficient household appliances and HVAC systems.
- **PRICE STABILITY:** Solar power is locally produced. The cost of producing it is not affected by international conflicts or market developments that can lead to spiraling prices for fossil fuels and to utility price hikes. Subscribers to a community solar project therefore enjoy greater price stability over time.
- **NEW SOURCE OF REVENUE FOR PROPERTY OWNERS:** When a community solar project is built on leased land or on surfaces that otherwise may not have good economic uses - like warehouse roofs and sub-prime agricultural land - this can provide a new and reliable source of lease payments for the property owners.
- **BENEFITS TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES:** Community solar provides jobs for local residents, as well as tax revenues to local governments. All of this helps fund local government services and infrastructure projects like road maintenance and schools.
- **BENEFITS TO ALL UTILITY CUSTOMERS:** Community solar saves all ratepayers money, because the electricity is locally produced and used and avoids the costs of transmission from large, centralized, far-away power plants.
- **GREATER EFFICIENCY:** Community solar arrays can be built in places that are well suited to solar production instead of placing panels on roofs oriented in less-than-ideal directions or cutting down trees to eliminate shade. That can translate into less expensive, higher performing solar in a community than otherwise might be possible.