



Overview

Solar energy has gained momentum across the United States, but it is still inaccessible to a large portion of the population. Community solar provides those who face significant barriers to owning rooftop solar, such as low-income communities, renters, and businesses, to reap the benefits of solar power. When subscribed to a community solar project, the local shared solar farm feeds energy into the local electricity grid. Community solar subscribers continue to receive power from their utility provider along with a credit on their utility bill that is based on the energy generated from the solar farm. Over 40 states have at least one community solar project. Community solar makes way for affordable, locally generated, clean energy without panel installation or costly fees.

Legislation

- **Colorado S.B. 207 (enacted 2024):** Mandates investor-owned electric utilities make community solar capacity available to their customers, with specific provisions to ensure equitable access for income-qualified households, renters, and other individuals who cannot install on-site solar systems.
- **New Mexico H.B.128 (enacted 2025):** Established the Local Solar Access Fund within the New Mexico Finance Authority, aimed at promoting the adoption of solar energy systems by providing grants to eligible entities such as counties, municipalities, school districts, land grants, and Indian nations, tribes, or pueblos.
- ****Maryland H.B.0908 (enacted 2023):** Made permanent the Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Pilot Program; required a community solar energy generating system to serve at least 40% of its kilowatt-hour output to low-income and moderate-income subscribers.
- **Maryland S.B. 783 (enacted 2024):** Creates the Customer-Sited Solar Program to offer grants to eligible low-to-moderate income customer-generators for installing solar energy systems and extends the personal property tax exemption for community solar energy.

KEY POINTS

- Community solar offers the benefits of solar power to those who do not have access to solar panels on their homes. ([Solar United Neighborhoods](#))
- Depending on the state, community solar programs vary significantly in size, scope and goals, allowing state legislators to tailor programs to their communities. ([Greentech Media](#))
- Virtual Net Metering (VNM) makes a way for those who are not eligible for rooftop solar to receive the benefits of solar energy. VNM and similar policies permit households to receive the net metering credits that are generated with a renewable energy project in a neighboring location. ([EnergySage](#))
- States can drive better access to solar by allocating a certain percentage of all community solar projects to low- and moderate-income households. ([Clean Energy States Alliance](#))

- **Minnesota S.F. 4942/H.F. 4975 (enacted 2024):** Removes interconnection barriers for community solar subscribers by directing the Public Utilities Commission to establish rules that increase capacity and reduce financial burdens for grid improvements.
- **Virginia H.B. 108 (enacted 2024):** Establishes a shared solar program aimed at facilitating the development and participation in shared solar facilities for customers.

Other Resources

- **NC Clean Energy Technology Center:** [Community Solar in the Southeast Policy Landscape for Public Utilities](#)
- **Solar United Neighbors:** [Community Solar Overview](#)
- **Institute for Local Self-Reliance:** [National Community Solar Programs Tracker](#)
- **The National Renewable Energy Laboratory:** [Community Solar Guide](#)
- **U.S. Department of Energy:** [National Community Solar Partnership](#)

