



# COMMUNITY SOLAR

Community solar refers to a small solar array located within a community where multiple customers like households, small businesses, churches, schools, and local governments can subscribe to a portion of the solar array and receive a credit on their utility bill for their share of the power the solar panels produce.

## COMMUNITY SOLAR

- *Expands access to solar*
- *Lowers upfront costs of solar*
- *Provides alternatives to solar ownership*

Many residents and businesses across Wisconsin cannot place solar systems on their property because they rent their space, have roofs that cannot host solar systems due to shade or type of structure, or they don't have the funds for the upfront costs to install their own system.

Wisconsin has a limited number of utility-sponsored community solar programs, most are fully subscribed, and some utilities in the state don't offer these programs at all.

We need legislation in Wisconsin to offer community solar to all residents who want access to affordable renewable energy. Presently, 23 states have policies supporting community solar, with subscribers seeing immediate bill savings. Community solar provides cost-effective renewable energy, strengthens the resilience of the grid, and spurs economic opportunity.



# COMMUNITY SOLAR LEGISLATION: AB 258 / SB226

In the 2023-2024 legislative session, Sen. Stroebel and Rep. Krug along with 13 co-sponsors introduced legislation that would allow Wisconsinites access to community solar projects.



The legislation did not pass but similar proposals are planned in the future. Currently, state law allows people to generate their own electricity by having solar panels installed on their roof or access renewable energy through their utility, if the utility has utility-scale renewable energy projects.

Under typical community solar proposals, subscribers (such as individuals, small businesses, schools, and renters) participate in a community solar project and receive credit on their electric bill from their utility based on the energy produced by the panels. A third-party developer usually develops the projects, and the credit on the subscriber's electric bills helps pay for the cost of the arrays over time.

The legislation considered most recently required that each project must have at least three subscribers with no single entity holding more than 40% of the shares. The size of the project was limited to 5 MW (usually under 26 acres) and had to be within one utility service area. The projects needed 2/3 approval from the local government, assuring community approval.

Additionally, federal funding incentivizes the development of projects in lower-income areas and gives options for people who may not have the financial means to invest in solar energy on their own but could benefit from savings on their electricity.

