

COMMUNITY SOLAR 2.0: EXPANDING ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY

As scorching temperatures and violent storms make the perils of climate change increasingly plain, and with energy prices rising at a rapid rate, consumers, investors, entrepreneurs and even name-brand companies are turning an eye to the untapped potential of community solar energy.

Accessible, affordable and entirely renewable, community solar sits in the space between individual residential rooftop installations and large, utility-scale projects. By providing renewable electricity to local communities – individual consumers and businesses – it offers a wide range of benefits, for subscribers, for investors and for the environment. Its many possibilities are coming into focus in novel and exciting ways.

Community Solar Basics

Large-scale but not utility-scale, community solar offers low-cost and renewable sources of electricity with economies of scale that dwarf rooftop panels or other small-scale efforts. It makes it possible for customers to enjoy advantages of solar energy without having to install their own solar energy system.

Community solar programs currently exist in 19 states. Each state's program includes different features, but generally community solar states let customers sign up for a qualified program, make payments (typically through their utility company) and get credits from their utility company that can save as much as 10% on their electricity bills. Eventually, their credits have the potential to zero out customer bills, while giving subscribers the satisfaction of working toward a clean-energy future.

Following early concerns about creditworthiness, those barriers to entry have eased, making community solar available to more people and businesses where rooftop PV systems aren't feasible – in particular low-income individuals, renters and businesses that lease their space. And a number of players have stepped up to help customers in states without a community solar program to participate, often for a minimal fee.

Community Solar 2.0

As access to and awareness of community solar rises, many companies are stepping up to transform and expand the reach and impact of the model, often with fresh and exciting approaches.

[Arcadia](#) is a technology company that provides one-stop shopping for community solar customers, making it easy for customers to create an account online that integrates with most of the utility companies in the country. Customers pay one bill and they keep their current electricity provider, while their local energy grid gets cleaner and their bills get cheaper.

Arcadia's approach has gotten noticed by some well-known names. McDonald's partnered with Arcadia to let all employees access the platform for free — allowing workers to reduce energy bills, support clean energy and help the company work toward corporate sustainability targets. Likewise, Audi worked with Arcadia on a promotion for its e-tron electric models that gave every buyer a free Arcadia subscription, assuring e-tron owners they were home-fueling their cars with renewable energy.

“Arcadia has long been a market leader in creating equitable access to clean energy and savings, and we are thrilled to be helping to open and expand community solar markets to serve our customers across the country,” said Joel Gamoran, General Manager of Energy Services at Arcadia. “Arcadia is proud to serve customers of all income levels and credit histories while leveraging our technology to mitigate risk for investors.”



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JOEL GAMORAN, ARCADIA

Making Clean Energy a Win-Win-Win

Expanding the scope and impact of community solar offers a whole menu of advantages, including:

MAKING CLEAN ENERGY A *win-win-win*

Scope 3 emissions
Partner companies can access analytics from work-at-home employees who tap into community solar, which may qualify as emission reductions and support ESG goals.

Tax benefits
A tax equity investment in community solar can convert your corporate tax liabilities into cash flowing assets.

Environmental benefits
A community solar investment can give your employees and customers access to an energy source that is renewable and saves them money.

Increased participation
For companies investing in community solar, employee and customer incentives to sign up get more people on the grid, in addition to offering an environmentally positive PR profile.

Social benefits
Many community solar projects offer incentives to target low-income households, encouraging the switch to lower-cost, cleaner energy by a larger percentage of the population.

Opportunities for Innovation
Community solar affords companies a chance to offer a conduit to renewable electricity that aligns with their missions, whether they're seeking to offset the energy used in their facilities or that used by their devices. By driving adoption, companies can grow the use of community solar while promoting their own ESG objectives.

Powering a Brighter Future

As both an investment and societal good, the momentum behind community solar is real and building. Investments in community solar allow companies to reap significant benefits in tax credits, build their bona fides as environmental advocates, and spur greater use among employees and customers. The potential for creativity in advancing and expanding the platform is broad and deep. With both science and sentiment driving the urgency of clean-energy future, it's safe to say that, for community solar, the best is yet to come.

For more information on community solar, [contact our team](#) today.