

Illinois Community Solar Fact Sheet

New Program Enables Energy Users the Option of On-Site Solar or Off-Site Solar to Reduce Subscriber Energy Costs

New Illinois state community solar legislation now provides energy users who own unusable land or large rooftop space the opportunity to host an on-site solar power system and/or participate as a solar energy subscriber. Both options will reduce energy cost, while contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions associated with traditional power plants.

Under this new community solar program, Illinois ComEd and Ameren customers—companies, colleges, community colleges, municipalities, and other energy subscribers— can build community solar installations on their unused land areas, such as open or unusable land parcels, former industrial sites, brownfields or large roof top spaces.

Through a newly established “virtual net metering” arrangement (see below), companies and other organizations can now receive substantial reductions in their energy bills from power generated by these solar installations located either on their property or at an off-site location.

WHAT IS VIRTUAL NET METERING?

Virtual Net Metering allows all subscribers in a community solar system to receive credits based on their share of the power generated by the system and fed into their local utility, without having to be directly connected to the community solar system itself; each subscriber’s share of the power generated by the system is applied as a credit to the electricity generation portion of each subscriber’s monthly utility bill.

The advantage of Virtual Net Metering is that it opens the savings benefits of solar power to many more subscribers, including companies and organizations who may not have the land or rooftop space to build their own solar installation.

With community solar, companies can now monetize the non-usable land they own—abandoned industrial sites, brownfields, or other non-buildable lots—into substantially lower energy costs.

ENERGY SAVINGS OPPORTUNITIES WITH COMMUNITY SOLAR

Community solar offers new energy savings opportunities in two ways:

- **As a primary subscriber owning a large area of unusable land or large rooftop space**, you can effectively monetize the value of this space into a significantly lower energy rate by having GEM Energy install the solar system, and receive reduced energy credits (see below) from up to 40% of the energy generated by this installation.
- **As a secondary subscriber, any other company or other organization can join this community solar installation**, receiving 40%, 20%, or some smaller amount of the energy credits generated by this solar installation, based on its share of the community solar system’s generated power.

All community solar subscribers receive an energy credit, based on their share of the energy generated by the solar installation. Using virtual net metering, this energy credit is applied to the kWh energy supply cost portion of each subscriber’s monthly utility bills.





“ The biggest advantage of community solar is that it gives organizations who have large utility costs and unusable land the opportunity to monetize the land, while also receiving an immediate and significant savings on their energy costs. ”

—JASON SLATTERY, DIRECTOR OF SOLAR, GEM ENERGY

Additional support provided to add secondary subscriber to complete the community solar project: As a primary subscriber in a community solar system, GEM Energy’s solar implementation team can recruit additional companies and other organizations within Illinois into the community solar system as secondary subscribers to complete the project. Once built, all subscribers will receive significant energy cost reductions over the long 20 or 25 year term of the community solar project.

WHO IS BEST SUITED FOR GEM ENERGY’S COMMUNITY SOLAR PROGRAM?

Primary Subscriber: Any company, municipality, educational or other commercial organization or facility having both large energy needs and available unusable land is a viable candidate to become a primary subscriber (up to 40%) in a community solar installation. Here are some basic requirements to help you determine if community solar will work for your company's energy needs:

- Monthly energy use: 750,000 kWh per month minimum;
- Land area required: At least four (4) acres of land area (or 200,000-square feet of rooftop space), up to a maximum of 12 acres (or 600,000-square-feet. of rooftop space)

Secondary subscriber: Organizations qualified to join a community solar system as a secondary subscriber would include any company, educational institution, or other organization whose energy use is at least 650,000 kWh annually. As a secondary subscriber, you also receive an energy credit on your monthly utility supply bills.



How Community Solar Works

Private and public organizations join together in their local community to reduce their monthly energy bills

Primary User (40%): HEAVY ENERGY USER WITH UNUSABLE LAND <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Company• College/University• Municipality	Secondary User A (up to 40%): MODERATE TO HEAVY ENERGY USER SEEKING ENERGY COST SAVINGS	Secondary User B
		Secondary User C
		Secondary User D

The community solar project is built on the site of the **primary user**, who has both large energy usage and unusable land, and receives an energy savings credit on their monthly utility bill for up to 40% of the power generated by the project...

Any number of secondary users can join the project, sharing any amount up to 40% of the project's total energy output, with each user receiving their proportional share of the project's output as a savings credit on their energy bill.

GEM ENERGY HAS THE EXPERIENCE TO MAKE COMMUNITY SOLAR A COST-SAVING REALITY FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

By partnering with an experienced solar implementation company like GEM Energy on a community solar project, you gain the key advantages required to make a community solar project a reality for your organization:

- **Construction expertise:** GEM Energy has designed, engineered, and built many commercial and industrial-grade solar installations throughout the Midwest and in New York State. As a member of the Rudolph Libbe Group, one of the Midwest's largest commercial and industrial builders, GEM Energy has the team, the knowledge, and the experience to design and build a successful community solar system in your area;
- **Community solar implementation support:** As a primary subscriber, GEM Energy can provide the vital support required to contact, recruit, negotiate and close agreements with other companies and organizations in your area to join the community solar project as secondary subscribers;
- **Ongoing administration and regulatory expertise:** Once the community solar project has been built, GEM Energy takes care of all associated billing for all subscribers on the system, as well as managing ongoing regulatory and compliance for the project.

In exchange for paying substantially less on your monthly energy bill, as a community solar subscriber you enter into a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with GEM Energy for a 20 or 25 year term for your share of solar energy by the system. You will continue to buy energy from your local utility, but now it will be offset by your community solar credit. GEM Energy will show you how this new energy portfolio cost will still be substantially lower compared to your current energy costs. Energy rates from a PPA are also constant for the life of the agreement, which keeps a significant portion of your monthly energy costs stable and predictable for the lifetime of the PPA.



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