

Solar for All

Frequently Asked Questions



NY-Sun

What is Solar for All?

Solar for All provides eligible households the opportunity to subscribe to community solar at no cost. Community solar generates clean electricity in New York, creating local jobs and improving the environment.

Solar for All program participants receive a credit on their monthly electricity bill for the energy produced by the community solar project. Program participation is free—there are no upfront costs, fees, or payments involved. By signing up, you will save your family money while growing the local economy and helping your community benefit from a cleaner environment.

What is community solar?

Community solar allows you to benefit from solar with no equipment required. Solar panels are installed at a site in your community rather than on individual roofs. The generated electricity is then fed into the local power grid, increasing the amount of available clean energy while decreasing fossil fuel emissions. Area residents can subscribe to the community solar project and receive credits on their monthly electricity bill. Depending on the community solar project size, dozens or even hundreds of community members can subscribe to a single project.

Who is eligible for Solar for All?

You must live in New York State, pay your own electricity bill (regardless if own or rent your residence), and meet the following requirements:

- Have a household income below 60% of the State median income—you can use participation in utility or federal assistance programs to demonstrate eligibility. Visit nyserdera.ny.gov/solar-for-all-eligibility to see if you qualify.
- Pay your electricity bill to one of the State's major utilities: Central Hudson Gas & Electric, Con Edison, National Grid, NYSEG, Orange and Rockland, or Rochester Gas & Electric.

PSEG Long Island customers, those who receive electricity from a municipal utility, and households with low electricity use (under 1,000 kilowatt hours in the last 12 months) are not eligible to apply.

What does no cost really mean?

There are no upfront costs, monthly charges, or fees of any kind. Your subscription is paid for by the program, which is administered by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) as part of the NY-Sun Initiative.

What is NY-Sun?

NY-Sun is a New York State initiative administered by NYSERDA that aims to make solar more accessible to all New Yorkers. NY-Sun provides incentives, financing, education, and other resources that will help grow solar projects of all shapes and sizes across the State.

Do I need to install anything in my home, on my roof, or on my property?

No. The community solar project is installed at a site in your area, which means no equipment will be installed at your home. Additionally, you will not need to make changes to your electric service and no one from the utility or program will need to make a home visit.

How will the solar energy get to my home?

The clean energy generated by the community solar project will be fed into the local power grid operated by your utility. That means a portion of the electricity you already receive from your utility will now come from locally produced solar energy.

Where will my community solar project be located?

Solar for All is working with community solar projects throughout the State. When you sign up, we will match you with one that is as close to your home as possible. You'll receive key information about the project, such as site location and size, as well as how much clean energy will be generated each year.

Am I changing my utility?

No. Your account with your current electricity provider will remain the same.

Do I need to let my utility know I am signing up for this?

No. NYSERDA and the solar developer that operates your community solar project will work together to inform the utility on your behalf. You will not need to call or make any changes to your account. No additional information beyond what you provide on the Solar for All application is necessary.

Who operates the community solar project?

A solar developer will operate the community solar project. Solar developers are private companies that design, install, and maintain community solar projects. The developers and projects participating in Solar for All are selected by NYSERDA.

Is this the same as buying my energy from an Energy Services Company (ESCO)?

No. With a community solar subscription, you receive credits from a specific community solar project in New York State based on how much electricity it feeds into the local power grid. The subscription through Solar for All is completely free.

Can I participate in Solar for All if I am already buying my energy from an Energy Services Company (ESCO)?

Yes. You can participate in Solar for All and do not need to make any changes with your ESCO or utility.

Can I participate in Solar for All if I am already subscribed to a community solar project or have solar installed on my home?

No. Based on statewide regulations for all net metered and distributed generation technologies, a customer can only receive solar from one source. That means a customer can have solar on their roof (if they happen to be a homeowner) or they can subscribe to a single community solar project

However, if resident signs up for Solar for All, and at any point in the future would like to install solar on their roof or switch to a different community solar project, they can contact NYSEDA and cancel their Solar for All subscription. There is no fee or penalty for doing that at any time.

Will I still have electricity on cloudy days? How about at night?

Yes. Because you continue receiving electricity from the power grid operated by your utility, you will not need to worry about having electricity, regardless of weather or time of day.

If utility lines go down in my area, will I still have power because I have solar energy?

No. Since the utility's power lines are still delivering electricity to your home, it will affect your power supply if there is an interruption in service.

What is a bill credit?

Your utility purchases the energy generated by the community solar project and money is distributed to community solar project members in the form of credits that appear on your monthly electricity bill. Your bill will reflect the credited amount in dollars and explain how much electricity was generated by your community solar subscription that month.

Do I need to do anything to redeem my bill credits?

No. The credits will automatically appear on your monthly electricity bill from your utility.

How much will I save?

It depends on how much energy is generated by the project—it will be a different amount each month. In sunnier, summer months, for example, the project will generate more solar energy and earn you more credits than in the winter. We estimate that you could see an average of \$10 per month in credits on your electricity bill.

Will this program affect my other benefits like heating bill assistance?

No. Participation in Solar for All will not impact your eligibility for the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) or other benefit programs.

Can I participate in Solar for All if I am receiving a Bill Discount through my utility?

Yes. If you are receiving low income bill discounts you can participate in Solar for All. Solar credits will roll over to the next month if you have no remaining payment obligation in the current month.

Can I participate in Solar for All if I am on a Budget Billing plan with my utility?

Yes. If you are on a Budget Billing plan you can participate in Solar for All and receive monthly credits on your utility bill from a no-cost community solar subscription. However, the way the credits are handled for Budget Billing customers will vary depending on your utility. If ConEdison or Orange & Rockland is your electric utility, your credits will reduce how much you pay on your utility bill each month. If NYSEG, RG&E, Central Hudson, or National Grid is your electric utility, your credits will be counted against your budget balance (what you owe the utility), and may be used to adjust your monthly budget bill.

How long will the no-cost subscription last?

The Solar for All program availability is planned for up to 10 years, beginning September 2018. Eligible program participants will enjoy the benefits of a no-cost subscription until the program closes. If you move, you may or may not be able to keep your subscription.

Can I still participate in Solar for All if I move?

It depends where you move. If you stay within an area where your current utility provides electricity, you will be able to keep your subscription. If you move to an area within New York State where another utility provides electricity, you may be able to keep your subscription if there is availability in a local community solar project for Solar for All subscribers. If you move outside of New York State, you will not be able to keep your subscription.

How do I cancel my subscription?

While we would like you to stay, you can cancel your subscription anytime by emailing us at solarforall@nyserda.ny.gov or calling 1-877-NYSMART.

Are there fees or penalties if I cancel?

No. There are no charges or fees to cancel your subscription.

Who can I get in touch with to learn more?

If you have any additional questions, email us at solarforall@nyserda.ny.gov or call 1-877-NYSMART.

GET STARTED

To learn more about Solar for All and see if it's the right fit for you, visit nyserda.ny.gov/solar-for-all or call 1-877-NYSMART.

