



## Community Shared Solar

### What is Community Shared Solar?

Community Shared solar, or community solar, is a way to get your electricity from a clean renewable resource (the sun!) even if your roof is shaded or old, or if you rent your home or apartment. Community shared solar is also good for businesses who want to do the right thing and be green by getting their electricity from a clean source. Consumers can buy or rent shares in community shared solar projects. Projects can be ground or roof-mounted.

**Community Shared Solar provides those that cannot install solar panels on their roofs the opportunity to reap the benefits of renewable energy.**



Three Community Shared Solar Ownership Models:

**Special Purpose Entity (SPE):** Residents in a community join together and start a business venture in order to create a community shared solar project

**Nonprofit:** A charitable nonprofit organization creates a community shared solar project on behalf of businesses and residents

**Utility-Sponsored or Owned by a Corporation:** A utility owns or operates a community shared solar program that residents can participate in at their own will.



**Want to Start a Project in Your town?**

Straight off, we recommend you pull together a group of like-minded folks in your town, people who care about where their energy comes from and are willing to help shepherd the projects through the process.

It can be especially helpful to have a champion within your town government as a part of your team!

- Identify a local solar company as a project partner. This company will partner with you to ultimately install the project and sell it to the other participants.
- Investigate potential sites to construct the project and work with your local solar provider to understand the costs associated with a particular site.
- Formalize the list of other participants. It is recommended that a member managed limited liability corporation (LLC) be set up.
- Finalize the community members
- sign up with the installer
- have your local solar company permit and construct the project
- Enjoy the many benefits of community shared solar.

**Community Shared Solar Success Stories in Massachusetts:**

**Lexington:** Lexington has made huge strides towards community shared solar. The solar panels on many of their schools and municipal buildings currently provide 1.1 MW of clean energy. Recently, the town was approved to build a 2.1 MW project on top of an old landfill. Lexington's next steps are to get permits for approvals and construction. Upon completion of the landfill project, combined with the solar on schools and municipalities, the town of Lexington will receive 45% of the town's municipal electricity from renewable energy.



**The Harvard Solar Garden:** The Harvard Solar Gardens were developed in two phases, and broke ground early in the spring of 2014. The second phase began later that year once it was fully subscribed. The Harvard Solar Garden was the first member-owned community shared solar installation in Massachusetts.



Today, the Harvard Solar Gardens are owned by approximately 100 members and have a total capacity of 524 kW. Members include businesses, renters, and many homeowners with shady roofs. Thanks to virtual net metering, Harvard Solar Garden members receive a share of the net metering credits generated by the solar panels on their National Grid electricity bill every month.

*Many MCAN chapters are working towards establishing community shared solar projects. Contact us at [info@massclimateaction.net](mailto:info@massclimateaction.net) to learn if your town is one of them, or how to begin the process of creating one!*