



How You Can Start a Project with People Power!

People power is powered by people – like you! Organizations and individuals may propose and initiate “Project Groups” to build solar projects or engage in other activities, such as social activities, education, or advocacy. People Power staff will work with you to navigate some key decisions, which include:



1. One-time project or ongoing group? Are you doing a one-time project or starting an ongoing cooperative group?

- **One project:** Some groups may want to organize people to build one solar project. Once the project is built, there is less work to do, so the ongoing management of the solar project may be done by your group or by People Power staff.
- **Ongoing cooperative group:** Many Project Groups will function much like self-governing “cooperatives” under the umbrella of the broader Cooperative, much as fiscally-sponsored projects do in the nonprofit sector. Such groups may decide to build multiple projects.

2. How will you finance the project? You may decide to mix and match financing sources, including:

- **Community financing:** People buy membership shares of the cooperative, those funds pay for solar installations, the site host/offtaker pays a monthly bill to the cooperative, some of the proceeds are reserved to redeem members’ shares in the future.
- **Panels to the people:** The cooperative facilitates arrangements where individuals own single solar panels on other people’s roofs, and the cooperative passes bill savings to the panel owners, enabling them to use the solar tax credit. Years later, the panel owners sell the panel to the cooperative. We’ve also referred to this as cooperative net metering.
- **Institutional finance:** The cooperative borrows money or sells cooperative shares to an institution like a foundation or credit union.
- **Access to subsidies:** The cooperative supports your group to access a special subsidy and build a solar project.
- **Tax equity financing:** The cooperative facilitates formation of a subsidiary LLC that the cooperative will co-own with a tax equity partner, an investor who can use the solar tax credit. The LLC will own the project in the near-term, transferring to the cooperative in the long-term.

3. How do you want earnings from the project to be used? Options include:

- **Member dividends:** Project members earn a small return on their shares,
- **Nonprofits:** Income from the project goes to a nonprofit,
- **Subscribers:** Surplus income from the project goes back to the subscriber, and/or
- **Democratically decided:** Project members collectively decide how to use the pool of earnings on an ongoing basis.

4. Who will be involved and what will be their relationship to the project? Are you engaging a particular community in this project? Will people have ongoing involvement or a limited term engagement? How do you want to make decisions as a group? Will any organization have partial control over your project? We’ll work with you to define that relationship and come up with an “operating agreement” for your group.

Propose a project: Propose a project or learn more by emailing Crystal@PeoplePowerSolar.org