



Community Solar for Community Action (CS4CA) Project

VT Community Energy & Climate Action Conference
December 1, 2018

COMMUNITY SOLAR FOR COMMUNITY ACTION

A national model for empowering low-income communities with solar energy.



Funder and Developer

SEVCA and RREAL collaborated to develop and fund this innovative project. Funding came from RREAL, SEVCA, grants, and individual donors.



Solar Array

Built by *Catamount Solar*, a Vermont based, worker-owned solar contracting company.



Community Action Agency

SEVCA identifies low-income households that will benefit from low-cost, low-carbon energy.



Beneficiaries

Low-income Vermonters see a reduction in their energy burden from the community solar subscriptions.

A low-income community solar solution brought to you by:



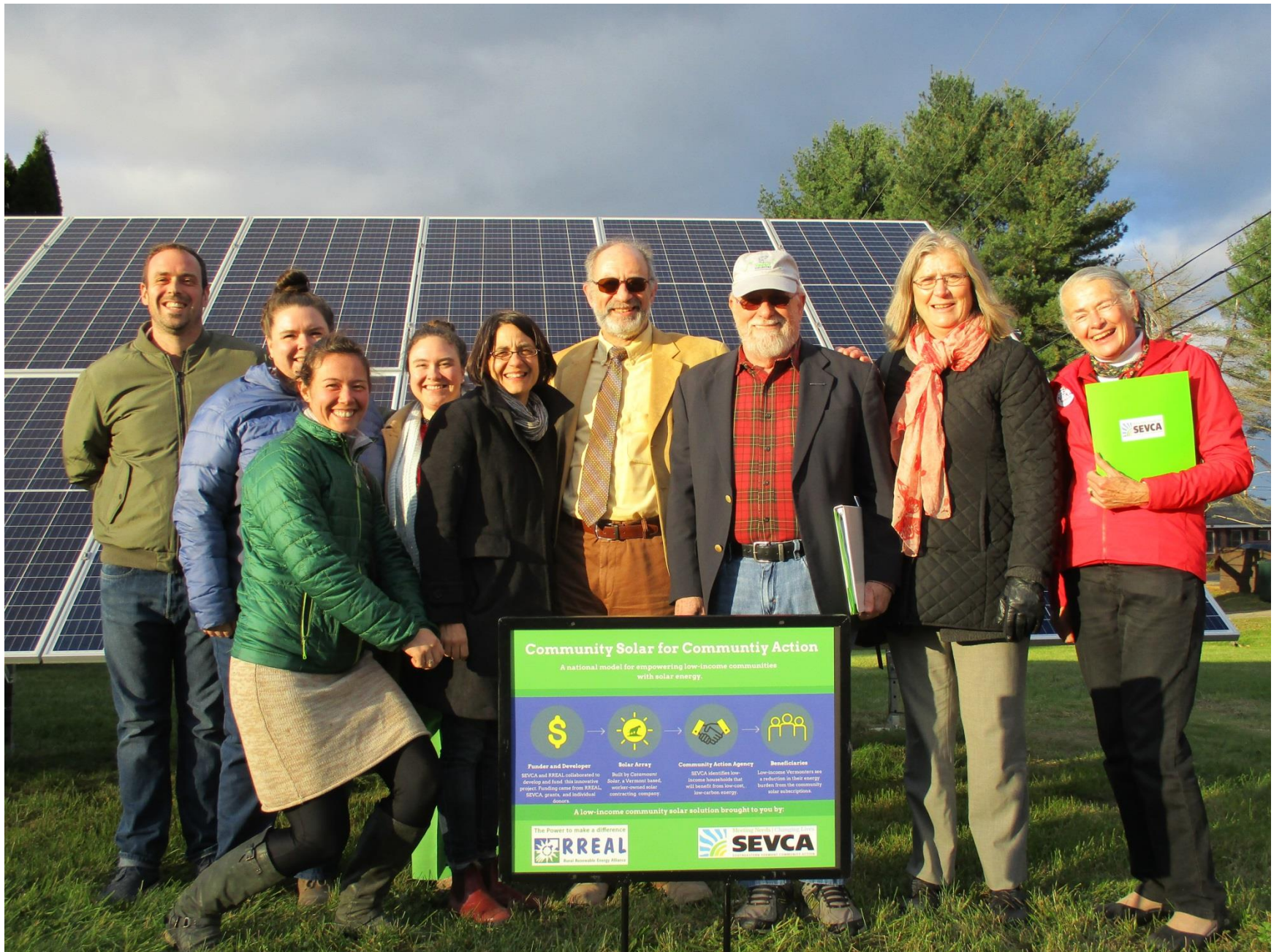












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Solar Array

Built by Clevermont Solar, a Vermont based, worker-owned solar contracting company.

Community Action Agency

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**SEVCA Community Solar Project
Dedicated to the Memory of
Harald Schmidtke
Weatherization Director
From 1993 - 2018**

**For His Unwavering Commitment to
Improving the Lives of Others and to
Creating a More Sustainable Energy Future**

Progress and Challenges

- **Certificate of Public Good Received and Project Commissioned by DPS**
- **Phase 1 (Ground-Mounted Array)**
Completed, Commissioned, Dedicated & Operating
- **Fundraising** painstakingly slow but getting close to goal (\$293K) – including major grant from Regional Planning Commission and several large private donations

Progress and Challenges (cont.)

- **Project Downsized** due to permitting, setback requirements, fundraising capacity, and VT's net metering rate structure changes
- **Truss Repair Needed** to safely support roof-mounted panels
- **Challenge of Program Design** – At our discretion...both opportunity and challenge

Program Design Issues

- **Target Population** – Highest potential impact vs. simplicity & ease of participating
- **Eligibility Determination** – Accuracy & relevance vs. documentation difficulty, cost, & administrative burden
- **Level of Assistance** – Meaningful individual vs. aggregate impact
- **Integration with Weatherization & Energy Efficiency Coaching**
- **Housing Stability** – Threshold for participation

Participant Criteria Options

- **Households (HHs) with high energy cost burdens**

- ❖ **Benefits**

- Most directly relevant measure
- Max. flexibility in eligibility criteria

- ❖ **Challenges**

- How to define high energy cost burden
- What documentation will be required and how will we get it?
- Too complicated and expensive to implement?

Participant Criteria Options (cont.)

- **Households that heat with electricity**
 - ❖ **Benefits**
 - Finite & easily identifiable group
 - Data / documentation readily available so eligibility determination should be simple
 - ❖ **Challenges**
 - Very limited population to choose from
 - Doesn't address overall energy burden; only accounts for one energy source
 - Leaves out use of space heaters to supplement primary heat source

Participant Criteria Options (cont.)

- **Households ineligible for other energy assistance**

- ❖ **Benefits**

- Addresses the needs of a frequently unserved or underserved group
- Allocates benefits more fairly and increases flexibility in who receives assistance

- ❖ **Challenges**

- How do we know these HHs more in need than those who qualify for / receive other assistance?
- Requires add'l eligibility determination

Participant Criteria Options (cont.)

- **Households that have received or will receive Weatherization / Energy Coaching**

- ❖ **Benefits**

- Reduces inefficient use of scarce solar energy assistance
- Creates better-informed energy consumers

- ❖ **Challenges**

- Fewer HHs receiving larger bundle of benefits
- Would benefit lower % of renters although they tend to have higher energy cost burdens

Participant Criteria Options (cont.)

- **Households with expectation of housing stability for at least a year**

- ❖ **Benefits**

- Minimizes loss of solar credits due to exceeding allowable # of subscriber changes
- Enables greater long-term impact on HHs

- ❖ **Challenges**

- Excludes those with housing instability, who may have greatest need for assistance
- May be viewed as discriminatory

Questions? Suggestions?

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