



Community Solar and Energy Affordability: Federal and Community-Based Solutions

National Community Action Partnership Conference

September 1, 2022, 3:30 – 4:45pm ET

Session Speakers

U.S. Department of Energy



Nicole Steele

U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services



Akm Rahman

NYSERDA



Max Joel

HeartShare



Tanya Jones

Agenda

Time	Content	Speaker
3:30 – 3:35 p.m.	Introductions & Session Overview	Nicole Steele
3:35 – 3:40 p.m.	Community Solar Overview	Nicole Steele
3:40 – 3:45 p.m.	Low Income Community Solar Subscription Platform Overview	Nicole Steele
3:45 – 3:55 p.m.	Department of Health and Human Services Role in Project	Akm Rahman
3:55 – 4:05 p.m.	NYSERDA Community Solar Program & Role in Project	Max Joel
4:05 – 4:15 p.m.	HeartShare Human Services & Community Solar Opportunity	Tanya Jones
4:15 – 4:40 p.m.	Q&A	Nicole Steele + ALL
4:40 – 4:45 p.m.	Getting Involved & Next Steps	Nicole Steele

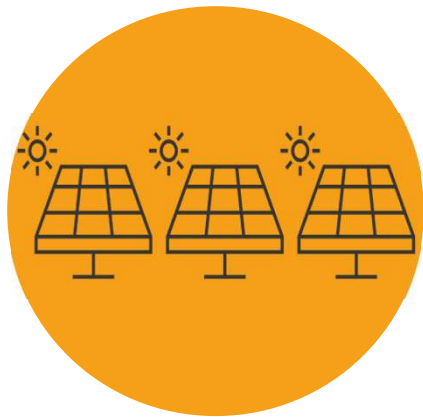


What is community solar?

The U.S. Department of Energy defines community solar as any solar project or purchasing program, within a geographic area, in which the **benefits** of a solar project flow to multiple customers such as individuals, businesses, nonprofits, and other groups.

Community Solar

Community Solar Project



Solar panels generate electricity from the sunlight



Subscribers pay the host for their share of the community solar project

Utility



The electricity flows through a meter to the utility grid



Each utility assigns a dollar value to solar electricity

Subscribers



The subscriber gets a credit for the value of the solar electricity on their monthly electric bill



Energy Burden Reduction



LMI Household Access



Resilience



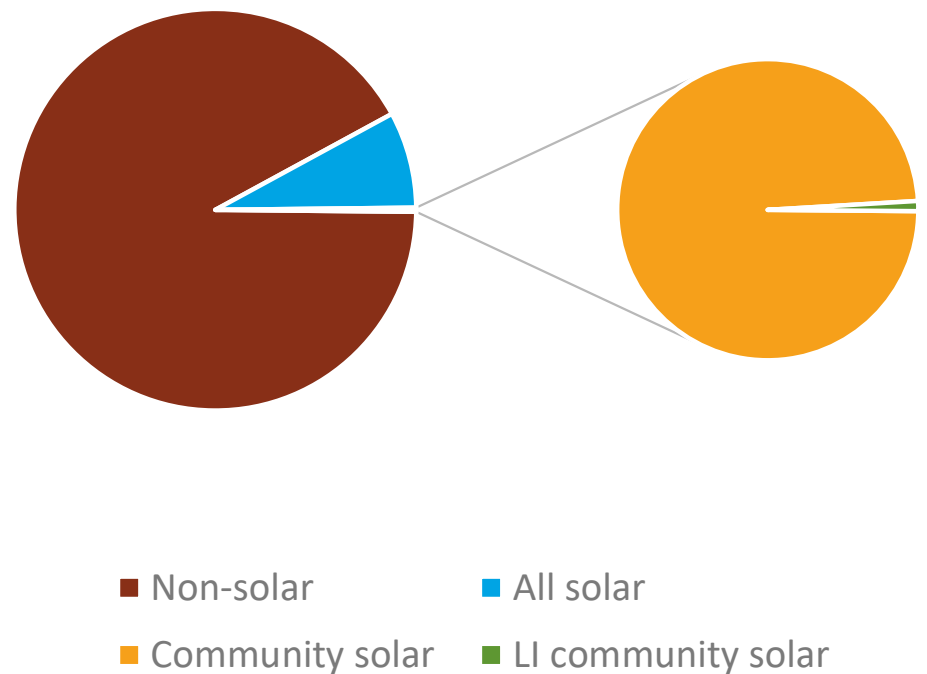
Community Ownership



Workforce Development

Why Community Solar?

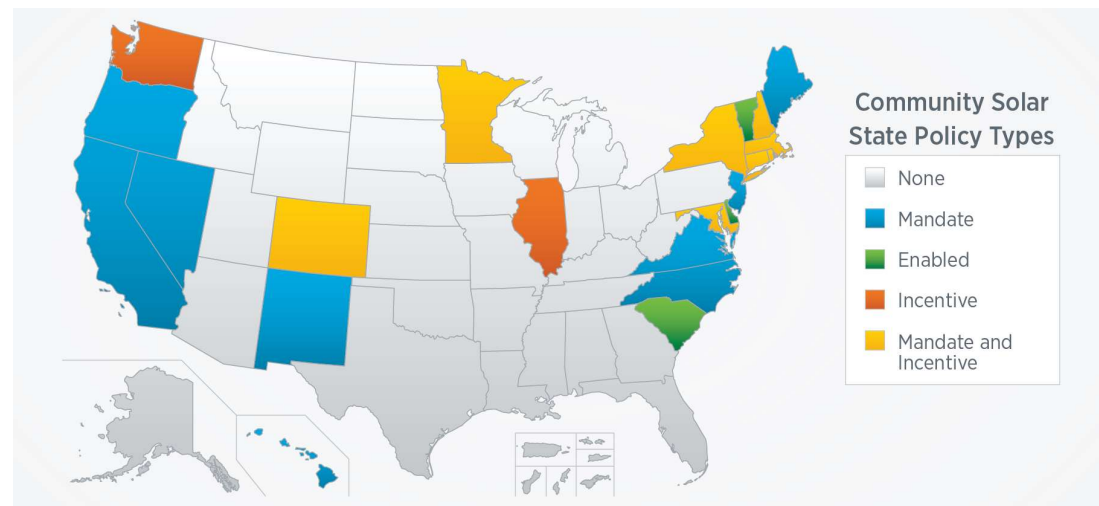
- 49% of households and 48% of businesses **cannot** host a solar system on their property because of ownership and insufficient roof space challenges
- Solar represents <10% U.S. electric generation capacity
- Community solar represents <5% of solar
- Mandated or incentivized Low- to Moderate-Income (LMI) community solar represents <1% of community solar.



Sources: EIA, SEIA, NREL, NREL (unpublished)

State Community Solar Markets

- 22 states plus Washington, D.C. have policies that require or support community solar
- Nearly every state with enabling community solar policies includes an LMI community solar component
- Policies vary but typically have a target of 20-50% LMI serving capacity; some programs provide a financial incentive for LMI community solar



National Community Solar Partnership Overview



Data Tracking

- Sharing the Sun is a market trends annual report that is managed by NREL through NCSP; partner commitments are tracked to the program and its goal, and program evaluation is done to determine success.



Collaboration

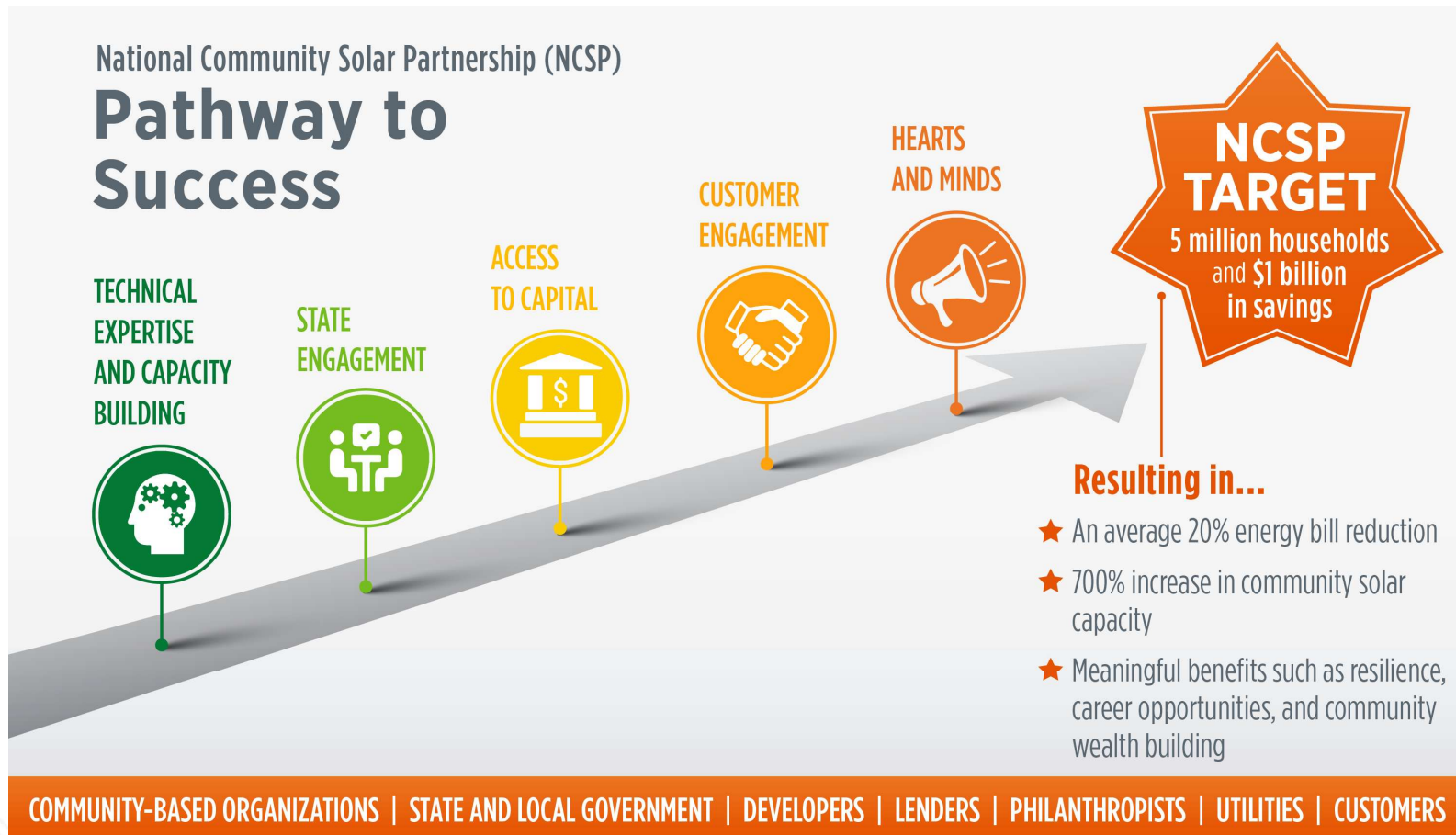
- Partners can access an online community platform, virtual/in-person meetings, webinars and other tools to engage with DOE, National Labs, and each other.



Technical Assistance

- Partners have access to resources and direct technical assistance from DOE, National Labs, and third-party subject-matter experts to support local challenges.

NCSP Pathway to Success



Low-Income Community Solar Subscription Platform

The Challenge

- Households who receive Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) assistance can benefit from long-term electric bill savings provided by community solar subscriptions
- Low-income community solar is not being developed fast enough to meet the demand across states with LMI-specific policies
- LMI community solar developers face barriers with customer acquisition that raise project risks and costs

Overview of LI Community Solar Platform

Who

- The U.S. DOE's National Community Solar Partnership, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, National Energy Assistance Directors Association, and the National Association of State Energy Officials

What

- Develop and pilot a digital platform that will serve as a bridge platform to connect community solar subscriptions with verified savings and related benefits to recipients of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

How

- Coordinate with utilities, state and local governments, community action agencies, consumer advocates, community stakeholders, and industry to connect LIHEAP-eligible customers with low-income-focused community solar subscriptions with verified savings

Goals of the Platform

Lowering household energy bills



Lowering electricity bills and high energy burdens for LIHEAP-eligible households over the long-term through enrollment in community solar subscriptions

Increasing investor confidence



Building investor confidence in low-income community solar programs by minimizing the perceived risk of low-income subscribers

Expanding LI Community Solar Market



Expanding the community solar market to reach its multi-gigawatt potential; speeding clean energy deployment

Creating clean energy jobs



Creating clean energy jobs in solar system project development and operations and maintenance

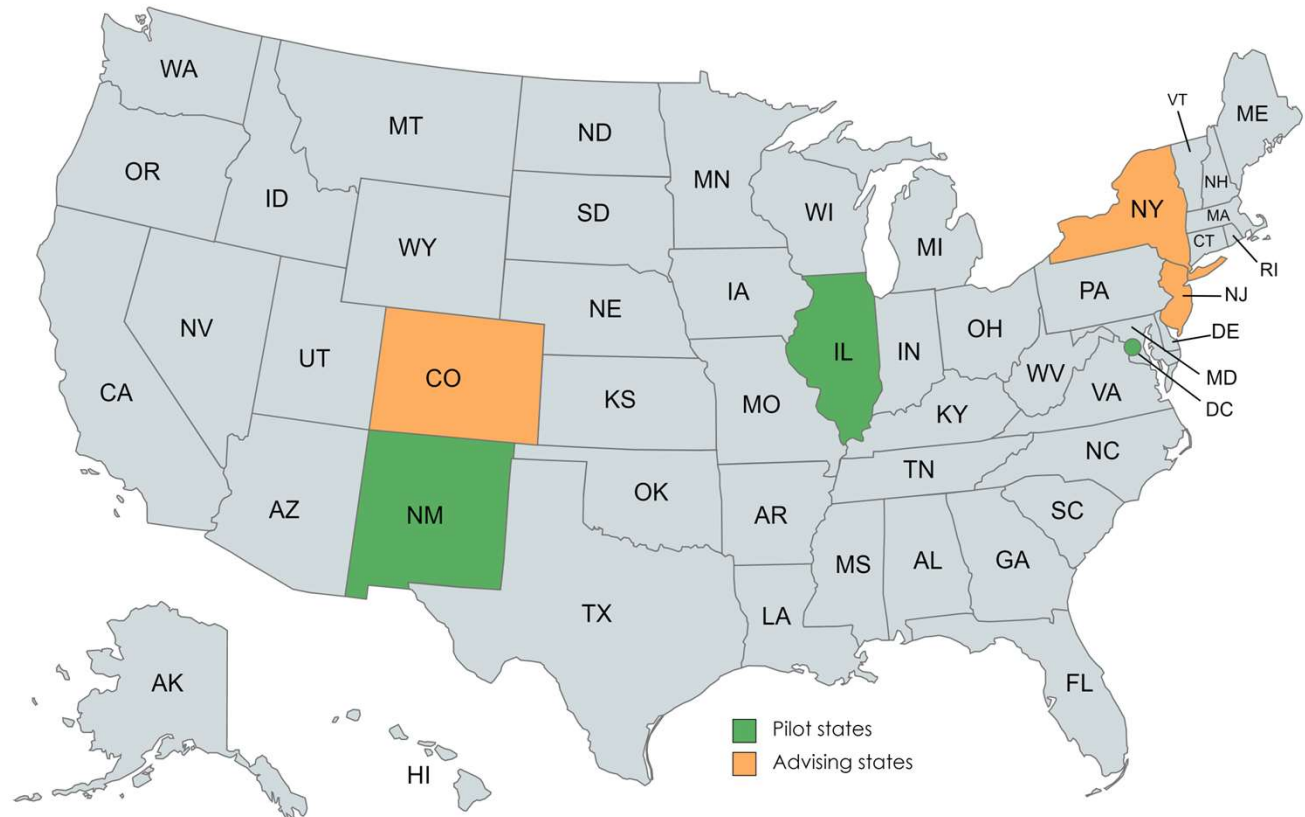
Lowering customer acquisition costs



Reducing customer acquisition and management costs of LI subscribers for community solar system developers and managers by connecting them to pre-qualified applicants through LIHEAP

Pilot and Advising States

- State LIHEAP Office and Energy Office or Public Utility Commission jointly supporting the development of the platform
- **Pilot States and Districts:** Illinois, New Mexico, Washington, DC
- **Advising States:** Colorado, New Jersey, New York



Key Considerations

Ensuring participant privacy and data security

Verified bill savings for LMI participants

Integration with utility billing and/or community solar subscription services

Designed to meet the needs of diverse stakeholders

Opt-in and transparency

Excellent customer experience

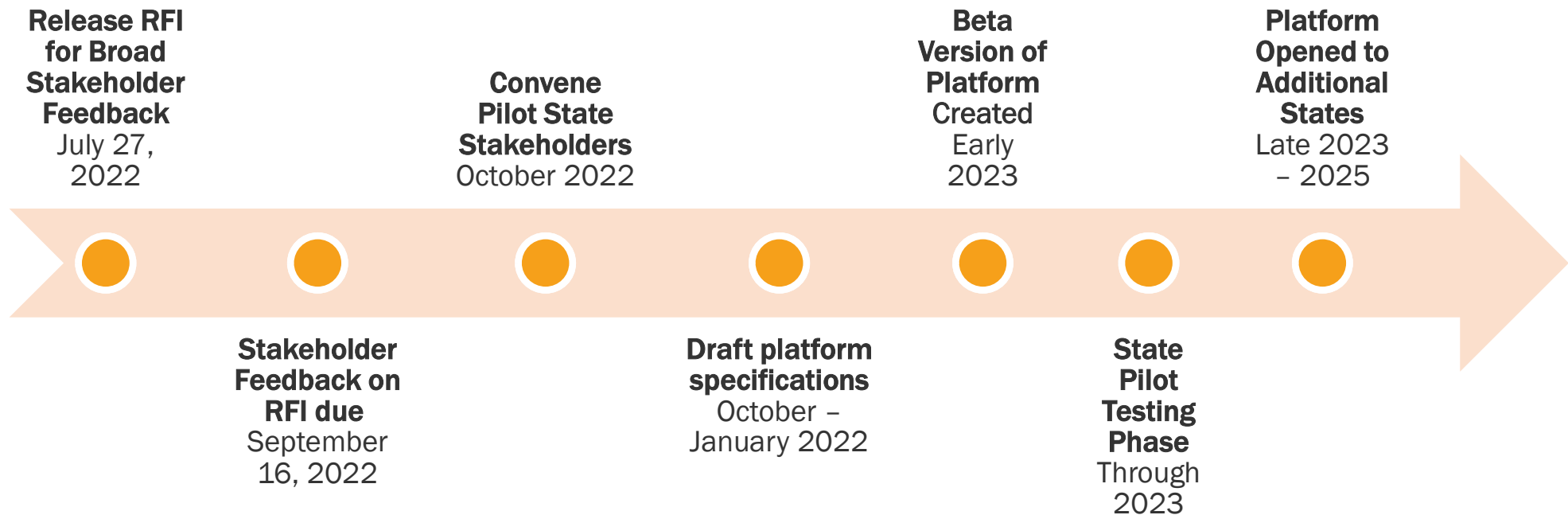
Input Needed!

Request for Information

- RFI provides opportunity for the public to provide input on the development of the LI Community Solar Subscription Platform
- DOE has several outstanding questions that we are seeking feedback on to inform the development of the platform:
 - How should the platform work? Who should participate and how?
 - What demographic and/or personal identifiable information is needed for the platform to work? How can this platform best suit the needs of community action agencies and low-income households?
 - How should community solar companies and projects be vetted to ensure savings and meaningful benefits? By whom? And how?
- You can respond to as many questions as you would like in the RFI
- Please send responses by 5 p.m. ET September 16th:
<https://www.energy.gov/communitysolar/request-information-low-income-community-solar-subscription-platform>



Timeline and Next Steps



For more information and updates on this project, see <https://www.energy.gov/communitysolar/liheap-community-solar-subscription-platform>



Panel Discussion

Thank You and Next Steps



LEARN MORE

Visit and bookmark the project landing page for more information and updates:
<https://www.energy.gov/communitysolar/community-solar-subscription-platform>



RESPOND TO THE RFI

Submit your response by **September 16:**
<https://www.energy.gov/communitysolar/request-information-low-income-community-solar-subscription-platform>



JOIN US

Join the National Community Solar Partnership:
<https://ncsp.solarinyourcommunity.org/registrations/groups/39758>

or email
community.solar@ee.doe.gov