



## SolarizeCNY: A History

Since 2009, Solarize campaigns have been emerging across the country to make it easier for energy customers to go solar. In 2015, New York State alone launched more than 30 Solarize campaigns. A key feature of a Solarize campaign is that customers have access to solar installers that have gone through a competitive bidding process that provides installation services at a reduced cost.

SolarizeCNY grew out of Solarize Madison, which in 2012 organized the first Solarize campaign in New York State. Their success in helping customers to go solar inspired activists in the City of Syracuse, and so in 2014, the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board (CNYRPDB), a sponsor of the Solarize Madison campaigns, began working with those activists to launch Solarize Syracuse.

In 2015, due to the overwhelming response from neighboring communities throughout Central New York, Solarize Syracuse renamed itself SolarizeCNY and grew to a five-county regional campaign: the largest in New York State.

Over the course of these three successful campaigns – Solarize Madison, Solarize Syracuse, and SolarizeCNY – nearly 350 customers have gone solar, bringing 3MW of solar power to the region.

Today, SolarizeCNY and the CNYRPDB are sponsoring a new initiative, their first Shared Solar campaign called SolarizeCNY Communities.

## Shared Solar

Shared Solar is an arrangement that allows several different energy customers to purchase their electricity from one solar array, rather than from traditional energy sources. There are a variety of different models that can be used to bring Shared Solar to a community, including cooperative, charitable, municipal and power purchase agreement models.

Shared Solar was authorized in New York State in July of 2015 as a result of an order from the State of New York Public Service Commission that allows for multiple customers to offset their energy usage from a solar array that is located away from their property. This can be referred to as “virtual net metering,” or Community Distributed Generation (CDG), but is more commonly referred to as Shared Solar or Community Solar. Each Shared Solar project must have at least ten customers, or members, who must all live in the same utility service territory where the solar array is located. Members may be homeowners, renters, businesses, non-profit organizations or municipalities.

## The Need For Shared Solar

Many energy customers with an interest in using a renewable energy source to supply them with electricity have been unable to install solar arrays. After our 2015 SolarizeCNY campaign, more than 1,000 potential participants were left out for a variety of reasons, among them:

**Roof:** Sometimes a roof is deemed unsuitable. To install a solar array on a property, the roof must meet certain requirements, such as those involving shading, pitch, age, or orientation.

**Cost:** Despite financial incentive programs and reduced costs negotiated by SolarizeCNY, some interested homeowners were unable to afford the upfront costs necessary to purchase a solar array. Such upfront costs can include: down payments, new roof installation, and tree removal.

**Home Ownership:** Some interested customers did not own their homes, and many renters may not have yet expressed their interest in going solar.

## SolarizeCNY Communities

To broaden our ability to bring solar to Central New York, SolarizeCNY introduces its newest program, SolarizeCNY Communities which will offer a power purchase agreement model of Shared Solar.

SolarizeCNY Communities will partner with a private solar developer that will build, own and maintain one or more solar arrays in the five-county region. SolarizeCNY will help to sign up energy customers who want to offset their energy usage with the production from that array. Rather than drawing their electricity from traditional sources, customers will see reflected on their bill that they are connected to a SolarizeCNY array. While the energy from the solar array will not power their homes directly, customers will benefit from the savings via credits that appear on their utility bill. Since electricity produced by a solar array is less expensive than traditional sources, customers will see a decrease in their electric bill.



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