



**Community  
Power  
Network**

**SOLAR CO-OPS: HELPING  
COMMUNITIES GO SOLAR**

# OVERVIEW

- Who we are
- What is the solar co-op model?
- How solar co-ops are different?



# ABOUT COMMUNITY POWER NETWORK

- Non-profit that supports community-based renewable energy
- Provides technical and organizational support in key states to ramp up solar market.



# OUR EXPERIENCE

- Have been working in region since 2007
- Provide technical assistance to groups around the country
- Deep technical expertise of solar technology, local industry, solar market, and regulatory framework
- Understand policy and regulatory framework
- Extensive experience implementing programs and projects
  - Residential, nonprofit, & commercial



# WHAT WE DO: HELP COMMUNITIES GO SOLAR

In last 18 months have helped communities organize co-ops in:

- Wards 1, 3, 4, 5 (twice), & 6 in Washington, DC
- Hyattsville/Mt. Rainier, MD
- University of Maryland staff, alumni, and community
- World Wildlife Fund staff and friends
- NoVA interfaith community
- Baltimore interfaith community
- Blacksburg, VA
- Floyd, VA
- Harrisonburg, VA
- Fayette County, WV
- Monroe County, WV

Have recruited over 1,744 participants and installed 371 systems  
(and counting)



# SOLAR CO-OP MODEL: A DIFFERENT APPROACH

- How the co-op approach is different:
  - Participant-driven process
  - Emphasis on education
  - Emphasis on community “anchors”
  - Smaller size and limited timeframe



# CO-OPS: PARTICIPANT-DRIVEN PROCESS

## The Solar Coop Process

### 1. Attend an Info Session

Learn more about going solar and how neighborhood solar coops work.



### 2. Join Your Local Coop

Sign up online! Anyone can participate and there is no cost; the only requirement is that you want to go solar!



### 3. Get a Roof Review

Have your roof reviewed via satellite by CPN to make sure it's a good fit for solar energy.



### 4. Solicit Local Bids

Once the coop has 20-30 members, CPN solicits bids from local installers on behalf of the coop.



### 5. Review Bids as a Group

Coop members form a selection committee to review bids and select a single installer to complete all of the projects.



### 6. Get Individualized Proposal

Meet with the chosen installer to get an individualized proposal for a solar system for your home. This proposal will reflect the group discount.



### 7. Sign a Contract

Sign a contract directly with the installer.



### 8. Installation

Have solar installed on your home!



### 9. Celebrate!

Celebrate with the coop and help start other coops in your community!



# INSTALLER SELECTION

- Driven by participants
  - Participants sign up BEFORE installer is selected
  - Installers bid on specific list of houses
  - Installer is chosen by participants, not CPN
- Results:
  - Better pricing for participants
  - Participants more engaged
  - Avoids backlash from installers



# EDUCATION

- Heavy emphasis on participant education
  - Info meetings, weekly emails, info sheets, dedicated email account for questions
- Results:
  - Higher conversion rates (40-50%)
  - Better educated participants
  - Creation of “solar evangelists”



# PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS

- Form a co-op w/community “anchor”
  - Partner plans info sessions and recruit attendees
  - CPN handles online sign ups and RFP
- Can work with variety of anchors
  - Interested citizens
  - Non-profits
  - Government entities
  - “Green Teams”
  - Anyone else!



# PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS

- Results:
  - Can launch co-ops quickly (1-2 months) in response to demand
  - Short-term commitment by partner (6 months)
  - Limited workload
    - Partner sets up and advertises info meetings, CPN manages rest of process



# SIZE

- Smaller than Solarize programs
  - 80-100 total participants
- Short timeline
  - 4-6 months from launch to contract signing
- Results:
  - Deadlines help people move forward
  - Creates sense of community



# QUESTIONS?

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