



Virginia Shared Solar Program

Key Terms

Bill Credit: The monetary value of the electricity generated by the shared solar facility, in kilowatt-hours, that is allocated to a subscriber to offset their energy bill.

Low-Income Customer: Any person, or household, whose income is no more than 80 percent of the median income in the locality where the customer lives. The median income of the locality is determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Minimum Bill: The minimum amount shared solar subscribers are required to pay on their utility bill per month after accounting for any bill credits.

Shared Solar Facility: A solar facility that has at least three subscribers and at least 40% of its capacity subscribed by customers with subscriptions of 25 kilowatts or less. Additionally, a shared solar facility cannot exceed 5,000 kilowatts, and must be connected to the electric distribution grid. It should be on a single parcel of land.

Subscriber: Retail customer that participates in the shared solar program by owning at least one subscription of a shared solar facility.

Subscription: Contract between a subscriber and the owner of a shared solar facility. The subscription's estimated bill credit will not exceed the subscriber's average annual electric bill.

Subscriber organization: Any for-profit or nonprofit entity that owns or operates one or more shared solar facilities. Note: *A subscriber organization may use a third-party entity to serve as an enrollment agent to manage customer enrollment and directly interface with subscribers.*



FAQs

Who can participate in the shared solar program?

Any residential, small business, commercial or industrial utility customer. This includes customers that do not have access to solar on their own properties such as renters, people whose properties are unable to support solar panels for various reasons or others who do not want to install their own solar panels.

Additionally, a minimum of 30 percent of the total capacity of the shared solar program must be comprised of low-income customers.

Currently, shared solar is only available to customers within Dominion Energy's Virginia service territory.

Is there a cap on the shared solar program?

The maximum cumulative of the shared solar program initially will be capped at 150 megawatts and individual solar facilities are capped at a maximum capacity of five megawatts. The program will be expanded by 50 megawatts to a cumulative size of 200 megawatts if the initial program meets the 30 percent requirement for low-income participation.

What information should a subscriber organization provide to a potential subscriber?

The State Corporation Commission (SCC) has developed a standardized consumer disclosure form.¹ This form provides all the necessary information to be disclosed and potential subscribers should expect to receive this information in the format provided by the SCC.

How are shared solar subscriptions sold?

Shared solar organizations may use a variety of methods to contact utility customers and sell subscriptions including mailings, door-to-door marketing and online advertising. Shared solar organizations may also partner with housing providers to enroll a group of customers. For example, affordable housing providers may subscribe on behalf of their low-income tenants.

All subscriber organizations must provide consumer disclosure information and a description of how the shared solar program will function prior to executing a written contract. Consumers should carefully evaluate all prospective shared solar subscriptions. All written contracts should include a toll-free number and address for any complaints or inquiries.

How does the billing work?

There are two billing mechanisms for shared solar: separate billing and consolidated billing (net crediting). Under separate billing, a subscribing customer will receive two bills - one from the Subscriber Organization and the other from the utility. Under consolidated billing, a subscriber will receive one bill from the utility which includes their standard electricity bill and their shared solar subscription fee from the Subscriber Organization. There may also be a net crediting fee for consolidated billing.

¹ <https://scc.virginia.gov/getattachment/4902726b-7f38-4d46-8a41-493d99aba283/shared-standard-customer-disclosure-guide.pdf>



What are the types of shared solar subscriptions?

Each subscriber organization may offer a different type of subscription and in some cases a subscriber may have different options available to them from the same subscriber organization. In all cases, a subscriber should not subscribe for an amount that exceeds their average annual energy usage.

While there may be other options, these are the most likely types of subscriptions:

- **Fixed kilowatt hours per year:** the customer can choose to purchase a set amount of electricity.
- **Percentage of a shared facility nameplate capacity:** the customer would have a set amount of a shared solar facility reserved for them, and they will receive credits based on how much energy their share of the facility generates.
- **Fixed percentage of subscriber usage:** the customer would have a certain amount of their total usage covered by a shared solar subscription.
- **Variable percentage of subscriber usage:** the customer would have a variable percentage of their typical usage that may change depending on the season.

What is the difference between the community solar program and the shared solar program?

In Virginia, the community solar pilot program² is managed by utilities. Customer participation and enrollment is managed by a utility. A community solar facility is either owned by a utility or subject to a power purchase agreement with a utility. Some investor-owned utilities and electric cooperatives offer community solar programs.

The shared solar program is not managed directly by utilities. Instead, various subscriber organizations own and operate the solar facilities. Additionally, enrollment is managed by third-party subscriber organizations.

What is the difference between the shared solar program and the multi-family shared solar program?

The multi-family shared solar program³ is a separate program specifically designed for solar facilities that are located on the premises of a multi-family housing complex. This may include an apartment, condominium or duplex complex. The multi-family shared solar program has different rules and charges that apply to subscribers and subscriber organizations.

What happens to the environmental attributes?

It is the choice of the subscriber organizations to determine how renewable energy certificates (RECs) will be owned or utilized for the shared solar facility. They may sell these attributes to other entities or retire them on behalf of the subscribers. This information will be disclosed to subscribers.

² [§ 56-585.1:3. Pilot programs for community solar development.](#)

³ [§ 56-585.1:12. Multi-family shared solar program.](#)



Additional Resources

- Code of Virginia: § 56-594.3. Shared solar programs.:
<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title56/chapter23/section56-594.3/>
- Administrative Code: Rules Governing Shared Solar Program:
<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/admincode/title20/agency5/chapter340/>
- State Corporation Commission (SCC)
 - Subscriber Organization Licensing: <https://scc.virginia.gov/pages/Shared-Solar>
 - Frequently Asked Questions: <https://scc.virginia.gov/pages/Shared-Solar-FAQs>
- Dominion Energy Virginia Shared Solar Program: <https://www.dominionenergy.com/virginia/renewable-energy-programs/shared-solar-program>