

Exploring Community Solar

What Questions Should You Ask?

Community Solar is a large solar project shared by multiple subscribers. Nothing changes about the electricity flowing into your house from the utility grid, but you earn monetary credits from the system that offset the cost of your electricity bill while supporting the development of clean, renewable energy in Illinois. Community Solar allows individuals, businesses, schools, and other customers to access clean solar power when it is impractical, too expensive, or otherwise unfeasible to install solar panels on their property.

There's a lot to think about, so you should examine your specific goals and considerations, find a vendor you're comfortable working with, and carefully consider project and financial details. More information is available at illinoisshines.com.

Here are some questions you should ask prospective solar vendors about your project:



Your Offer

☐ **Electric Supplier**

Does your subscription require you to sign up to receive electricity from a new supplier? If so, what will your new electricity rate be?

☐ **Contract Length**

How long is the contract term for the subscription?

☐ **Subscriber Share**

Are you paying for a subscriber share of particular panels, and if so, are upfront payments required? If you're taking out a loan to make the payment, what are the loan terms and their impact on your projected reductions?

☐ **Subscription Rate Basis**

If your monthly fee is a price per kilowatt-hour basis, how does it compare to the existing rate you pay for electricity?

☐ **Fee Variability**

Can maintenance fees change over the contract term? Does your contract include an escalation clause that increase the amounts of payments over time?

☐ **Termination Fees**

Will you incur a fee if you wish to leave the contract early, including due to relocation?

☐ **Payment Requirements**

Is billing electronic with automatic payments required, or are other options available?

☐ **Electricity Usage**

What is the size of your subscription or share of the community solar project? Is this the right amount, given how much electricity you typically use? If your contract provides more bill credits than you would use over the course of a year, you may end up paying for credits on your bill that you don't actually use.

☐ **Estimated Savings**

Will you save more through community solar bill credits than you will pay in subscription fees? Compare your subscription's size and your electricity supply rate (which may change over time) to your subscription's cost to determine if savings exceed cost.



Your Project Type

☐ **Project Type**

Is this a Traditional Community Solar or a Community-Driven Community Solar project? If it's a Community-Driven Community Solar project, in what ways does the community benefit?



After You've Subscribed

☐ **Portability and Transferability**

Illinois Shines requires subscriptions to be portable or transferable. What restrictions or limitations on portability or transferability are included in the terms of your subscription?

☐ **Authorization to Manage Utility Account**

Does the offer require you to authorize the community solar provider to act as your agent with respect to your electric utility account? Make sure you understand what changes they can make to your utility account and whether you will still receive bills and notices from your electric utility.

