



Community Solar: What's in a Name?

The term “community solar” can be confusing, because it covers a wide variety of different types of programs in the U.S. Oregon currently has three different types of community solar programs.

Community Financed Solar / Community-Owned Solar (All of Oregon)

- Installed on buildings, typically schools, libraries, churches, nonprofits or local government buildings
- Any Oregon resident can participate
- Can provide emergency backup generation in case of grid blackouts from natural disasters
- Allows Oregonians to invest in solar that directly benefits their communities
- Not limited to solar – can use wind, micro-hydro, bio-gas digesters and other renewable energy technologies
- Upfront investment from participants required
- Participants can choose to receive payments based in the form of credits on their utility bills.
- Utilities not involved



Community Financed Solar at a Portland nonprofit

Community Solar (PGE / Pacific Power / Idaho Power)

- Installed on the ground or larger roofs, and provides power directly to the electrical grid, not through a building's meter.
- Authorized by the Oregon legislature in 2016, expected rollout mid-2019.
- Modeled on successful “solar garden” programs in Colorado, Minnesota and elsewhere
- Projects can be owned by utilities, for-profit companies, nonprofits, municipalities, or others.
- No upfront investment required from participants.
- Utilities provide bill credits to participants
- Utility involvement required
- Available to utility customers in PGE, Pacific Power and Idaho Power.
- Not available to utility customers elsewhere in Oregon.
- Cannot provide power directly to buildings or communities in case of a natural disaster.



6 MW Community Solar project in Minnesota

Community Solar (Co-ops, PUDs, and Municipal utilities)

- Available to customers of Municipal and cooperative utilities and People's Utility Districts – about a third of Oregonians.
- Offered by the utilities to their customers
- Customers can choose to support the projects by paying a small surcharge on their electric bills
- The first project in the state, and one of the first in the U.S, was in Ashland in 2000.
- To date, there are small projects available in Ashland, Emerald PUD, and Central Electric Co-op.