

Solarize With Faith

Stewardship in our hearts. Solar on our roofs.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is *Solarize*? Solarize Connecticut is a program that makes it easy and affordable for residents to get household solar energy. It is sparked by CT Green Bank and administered by SmartPower, a non-profit marketing group. To date, 72 communities in Connecticut have successfully completed campaigns — resulting in more than 18 MW of solar for more than 2,400 homeowners. Solarize makes it easy to go solar. The program provides discounts off the cost of a solar photovoltaic system, and residents get incentives from the state and a federal tax credit. Solarize works with a designated solar installer during a period of about 18 weeks to sign up as many households as possible. Residents get the benefit of working with this pre-approved installer, get a low price for a quality product, and get clean, low-cost electricity. The installer is selected by a group of local organizers who have reviewed the company's qualifications, equipment, pricing, and reputation to make sure homeowners can be confident they are getting a quality installation.

What is *Solarize With Faith*? It's a coalition of faith communities working in an exciting new partnership with the Solarize program. This coalition is organizing through houses of worship to bring residential solar to the homes of members of faith groups across the state.

Why focus on communities of faith? Many communities of faith are actively promoting social action to respond to the challenges of climate change and environmental justice. Across the state, more and more houses of worship are recycling, using organic lawn care, and buying renewable energy or installing solar panels for their institutions. *Solarize With Faith* harnesses the Solarize framework to bring green energy to the homes of these communities' members.

Which communities of faith? *Solarize With Faith* aims to work with all of Connecticut's faith groups.

How does *Solarize With Faith* work? A house of worship agrees to participate, then helps set up workshops and other opportunities for its members to learn about the program. Interested households contact the designated installer, and the installer assesses the home's solar potential. If the potential is good, the installer develops a design proposal and can help the household work out financial arrangements (e.g., apply for a special low-interest loan). The installer then obtains necessary permits, coordinates with the utility, and installs the system.

What if our town or city isn't participating in Solarize? That makes no difference at all. Any house of worship in Connecticut is eligible.

If our town has already done Solarize, is there any need for my house of worship to do *Solarize With Faith*? Yes. This program gives households an additional opportunity to get on board.

If some people in my house of worship already have solar, is there any reason for us to do *Solarize With Faith*? Yes. *Solarize With Faith* can help make solar affordable and convenient for many more people. In a matter of months, the campaign could easily double, triple, or quadruple the number of member households with solar.

How much would it cost for my house of worship to participate? There is no fee for a house of worship to participate. Its contribution is volunteering to help design a campaign, help publicize it, and help organize workshops and other events so members can learn about the opportunity and make informed decisions.

Does the program help make solar more affordable? Yes. The installer has agreed to offer a discounted price for *Solarize With Faith*. The State of Connecticut offers rebates, and the federal government offers a significant tax credit. Low-interest loans and other financing options are available. And under state law your electric utility gives you full retail credit for excess electricity your solar system produces from day to day.

For households that cannot afford to purchase solar, is leasing an option? Yes. Households that lease get some of the benefits of solar without having to put up capital to purchase the system. This can also be accomplished through some loan programs. Leasing makes the most sense for people who don't pay enough taxes to take advantage of the 30% federal tax credit for solar. If you can take advantage of the tax credit, loans are usually a better option to get the full economic value of solar.

How was the solar installer selected? Early members of the *Solarize With Faith* coalition selected Sunlight Solar as the initial installer for the program. They based the decision on the company's prices, equipment, experience, expertise, warranty, reputation, and history of doing solar installations for churches.

What should my house of worship's first steps be? Visit the *Solarize With Faith* web page and download the agreement form.

Does the Green Houses of Worship program provide credit for participating in *Solarize With Faith*? Yes. Credit is given in level 3.

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