



## Solar\*Connect Community<sup>®</sup>

**It's efficient, maintenance-free and local.**

### **What is community solar?**

Community solar — often referred to as a community solar garden — is an array of solar panels that generates clean and renewable electricity. Solar\*Connect Community, a locally sourced solar program in Wisconsin, includes solar gardens that are built, managed and maintained by a developer partner and connected to the local power grid operated by Xcel Energy. Subscribers — or program participants — pay a one-time fee to subscribe to the program and in turn receive a credit on their monthly electric bill based on the solar energy production of the gardens in the program.

### **What are the benefits of community solar?**

Community solar programs like Solar\*Connect Community benefit communities by providing local, clean and affordable energy. Residents and businesses alike can participate in solar without installation or maintenance of their own system. This program is especially desirable for renters or customers whose roofs are old, face the wrong direction, have limited space or excessive shade. Community solar also offers flexible participation levels to fit different budgets and energy needs.

### **What is Solar\*Connect Community?**

Solar\*Connect Community, the largest community solar program to date in Wisconsin, will have three 1-megawatt locally sourced solar gardens. Solar\*Connect Community subscribers have a contract with Xcel Energy and receive bill credits based on their subscription size and the combined solar energy produced by all gardens in the program.

### **What is the anticipated timeline for each community solar garden?**

The 1-megawatt community solar garden in Eau Claire has been generating clean, renewable energy since October 2017. The 1-megawatt facility in the greater La Crosse area, near Cashton, was energized in March 2019. The third, and final, 1-megawatt garden in Ashland will be built in 2019.

### **How big are the solar gardens?**

Each panel is approximately three feet wide by six feet long and can produce about 300 watts. More than 3,000 panels in total combine to produce one megawatt at each garden and will cover approximately seven acres (an acre is roughly the size of a football field).

### **What kind of equipment is used for the solar gardens and where does it come from?**

All of the solar garden facilities will utilize solar photovoltaic (PV) panels. Solar PV panels are made with materials such as silicon that generate electricity when exposed to sunlight. The Eau Claire solar garden is a fixed-tilt solar PV array, oriented facing south, as will be the case with the Ashland garden. The Cashton solar garden uses a single-axis tracking systems, with PV panels mounted on racking that moves (or tracks) with the movement of the sun. Solar PV panels are made all around the world, and Xcel Energy does not impose requirements regarding the equipment's country of origin. Our solar developers are encouraged to use local labor to install and maintain the solar facilities.

### **How do I get started?**

First, to learn more about the program visit our website at [xcelenergy.com/SolarConnectCommunity](http://xcelenergy.com/SolarConnectCommunity) or if you have questions, call our Energy Expert Team at 800.824.1688. When you're ready to sign up, simply complete the subscription agreement form on our website and mail it to Xcel Energy.

### **Who can participate?**

Any Xcel Energy electricity customer in Wisconsin can participate in Solar\*Connect Community — home and business owners and renters. There is still limited availability in the 3-megawatt program.

### **How much does a subscription cost?**

Xcel Energy is offering subscriptions at a cost of \$1,600 per kilowatt. The minimum subscription size of 200 watts costs \$320 and would produce enough energy to offset about 3 percent of an average residential customer's usage.

## How do I calculate a subscription level that matches my energy needs and budget?

You can start small or go big — the minimum subscription amount is 200 watts and the maximum is 400 kilowatts. Your subscriptions can be sized up to 100 percent of your average annual electricity usage (up to 400 kW). Xcel Energy has online residential and business subscription calculators at [xcelenergy.com/SolarConnectCommunity](http://xcelenergy.com/SolarConnectCommunity) so that you can check out various subscription sizes to match your energy and budget needs. The typical home in our Wisconsin area uses 750 kWh a month (9,000 kWh per year). The example below provides an approximate subscription size necessary to cover a percentage of a home's monthly energy use.

Goal Usage Match (%)	Monthly Usage Match (kWh)	Approximate Subscription (kW)	Approximate Cost
25%	187.5	1.6	\$2,560
50%	375	3.3	\$5,280
100%	750	6.5	\$10,400

Please contact us if you need assistance in determining your average electric usage.

Energy Expert Team: 800.824.1688

Email: [SolarConnectComm@xcelenergy.com](mailto:SolarConnectComm@xcelenergy.com)

## What is the bill credit rate and how is it determined?

The bill credit floor for residential, farm and small business is \$0.074/kWh. For large business, the bill credit floor is \$0.069/kWh. The bill credits are based on fixed and variable production costs embedded in Xcel Energy's current rates. This is not based on the full retail rate, but rather components that go into the retail rate for generation (i.e. average costs of all generation in entire fleet). If the generation fleet becomes more expensive over time, the bill credit will increase accordingly.

## How do I pay my balance and when will I start receiving bill credits?

You may pay your remaining balance by check or wire. Bill credits will begin about a month after we receive your final payment and continue for about 25 years. At this time, the credits are based on solar energy production from the Eau Claire and Cashton gardens and the North Star solar facility in North Branch, Minnesota, just 15 miles from the western edge of our Wisconsin service territory. These credits will continue uninterrupted, transitioning to the Wisconsin Solar\*Connect Community gardens as they become operational.

## What is the outlook for the bill credit rate?

The bill credit established at the start of the program is considered the "floor" for the bill credit. This means that the bill credit will never be lower than the initial bill credit rate (details above). It is possible that over a standard 25-year contract, there will be no increase. However, because the bill credit is based on the average cost of all generation in our fleet, changes to our Upper Midwest generation mix will affect the bill credit. Historically, the cost of generation in our fleet has typically changed between 0 to 3 percent annually. However, actual rates over the course of the program may deviate from this range.

## Will the amount of my bill credit change over time?

Yes. Due to the daily and seasonal variations in sunlight and solar production, your monthly bill credit will change throughout the year.

## Will subscribers receive Renewable Energy Credits?

Xcel Energy will track the Renewable Energy Credits associated with the solar garden program and retire those RECs on behalf of the subscribers. Because Xcel Energy will retire the RECs, subscribers have offset their energy use with solar energy.

## Can I sell my garden subscription to another subscriber or get a refund?

No. A subscriber can choose to gift their subscription to a not-for-profit organization that is an electric customer of Xcel Energy in Wisconsin. Subscribers can choose to terminate their contract early, but they will not receive a refund.

## What if I move before the end of the 25-year term of the program?

If you move within the Xcel Energy Wisconsin service area, you can transfer your subscription to your new address. If you sell your home and move out of our service area, you can choose to return your subscription back to Xcel Energy and receive a prorated refund. You also can choose to gift your subscription to a not-for-profit organization that is an electric customer of Xcel Energy in Wisconsin. Donation of your subscription to an eligible organization/charity may be tax deductible. Consult with your tax adviser to discuss all available options.

Visit [xcelenergy.com/SolarConnectCommunity](http://xcelenergy.com/SolarConnectCommunity) or call our Energy Experts at **800.824.1688**.