



Unpacking Community Solar Within Illinois Solar for All

July 28, 2023

Agenda

- 1. Housekeeping and Introductions**
- 2. Overview: Community Solar Within Illinois Solar for All**
- 3. Bringing Community Perspective to Community Solar**
- 4. Looking Ahead: National Community Solar Partnership and Connector Tool**
- 5. Q&A**

IPA Power Hour Webinars



- **Introduction and Scope**
- **Power Hour is a series of educational and informative presentations on a wide range of clean energy topics and emerging issues**
- **Today's Power Hour:**
 - **The speakers will discuss how community solar within ILSFA works, how the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) has broadened the focus of ILSFA's community solar through community ownership and energy sovereignty. In addition, the webinar will discuss the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Community Solar Partnership with the State of Illinois to design a portal connecting Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program participants with the ILSFA's community solar program.**
 - **This presentation is intended for educational purpose only and does not represent a legal interpretation or statement of policy by the IPA or its staff.**
 - **Future IPA Power Hour Webinars will cover other topics related to the clean energy economy in Illinois**

Upcoming Webinar

IPA Hour 7: Bring Solar to School-Benefits, Challenges, and Opportunities

Date: August 31, 2023

Time: 12-1pm CST

[REGISTER HERE](#)

About the IPA

Vision:

"A clean, reliable, and cost-effective energy future for residents and businesses across Illinois"

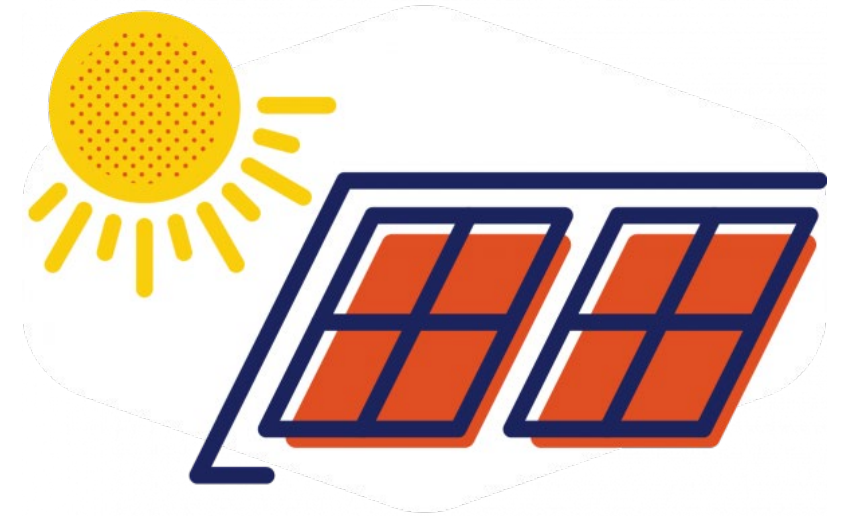
- Independent State Agency created in 2007
- Responsible for the development of an annual Electricity Procurement Plan for customers of electric utilities
- Supports the Illinois Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) through the development and implementation of:
 - Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan
 - Competitive procurement for utility-scale projects
 - Solar incentive programs for homes and businesses



Overview: Community Solar Within ILSFA

How does ILSFA Community Solar work?

- Community Solar allows eligible participants, also known as subscribers, to benefit from solar energy without installing panels on their own properties.
- A solar array is installed, connected directly to the electric grid, and anyone with an electricity account with that utility [and is eligible for the program] can subscribe to a share of that array.
- The subscriber's electricity account is credited based on their share of the electricity generated by the array.
- The solar developer bills the customer.



Solar Incentive Programs under the IPA



Illinois Shines

This state-administered solar incentive program opened for applications in January 2019 and was significantly expanded through the enactment of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (Public Act 102-0662). Offers incentives for distributed generation and community solar projects.

Illinois Solar for All

Illinois Solar for All is a state-administered solar incentive program that provides greater access to the clean energy economy for low-income communities through incentives that help make residential solar and community solar installations more affordable and result in measurable savings for participants. Also significantly expanded through the enactment of the CEJA.

ILSFA Sub-Programs



Small Residential (1-4 unit)

- PY5 budget \$11,637,500 (+Rollover)
- Costs and fees won't exceed 50% of value of electricity produced
- No upfront cost to participants



Large Residential (5+ unit)

- PY5 budget \$11,637,500 (+Rollover)
- Costs and fees won't exceed 50% of value of electricity produced
- At least 50% of households must be income-eligible
- Upfront costs allowed



Non-Profit/ Public Facilities

- PY5 budget \$16,625,000 (+Rollover)
- Non-profit or public sector facilities serving and located in income-eligible or EJ communities
- Costs and fees won't exceed 50% of value of electricity produced
- Upfront costs allowed



Community Solar

- PY5 budget \$26,600,000 (+Rollover)
- Income-eligible residents can subscribe
- Costs and fees won't exceed 50% of value of electricity produced
- No upfront cost to subscribers, with exception for energy sovereignty (ownership model)

Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA)

- **Eligibility:**

- Residents (Residential and Community Solar): **80% AMI**
- Non-profits/Public Facilities: Critical service provider and located in environmental justice or low-income community

- **Job trainee requirements**

- Project level
- Portfolio level

Environmental Justice Communities

- 25% of each sub-program incentives
- 60% of Grassroots Education campaign funding

Energy Sovereignty Projects (participant/community ownership)

- 25% of each sub-program incentives
- Incentivized with REC adder for DG projects (Residential Solar and NPPF), selection prioritization for Community Solar projects.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

- Stakeholder feedback opportunities
- Grassroots Education funding
- ILSFA Advisory Committee

Consumer Protections

Projects developed by vetted Approved Vendors

Projects must include warranties and guarantees of workmanship

Marketing requirements

Financial protections

Standard Disclosure Forms

Cost and savings requirements (ILSFA)

New for ILSFA from CEJA and since

- **Funding allocation increase**
 - Increase of total annual funding to \$66 million
- **Increase maximum size from 2MW to 5MW**
 - No more than 5MW combined on same or contiguous parcels
- **Labor and Equity requirements**
 - New legislation adds prevailing wage requirement to community solar and many NPPF projects.
- **DOE Low-Income Clean Energy Connector**
 - Collaboration with DCEO's Office of Community Assistance
 - Illinois one of three pilot states, along with NM and DC

ILSFA Projects To-Date

Sub-Program	Approved Projects	Total Capacity	Approved Incentives
Residential (1-4 unit)	267	1.709 MW	\$5,087,907
Residential (5+ unit)	12	2.746 MW	\$5,384,853
Non-profit/Public Facilities	120	19.946 MW	\$44,292,276
Community Solar	21	27.816 MW	\$80,168,692

Illinois in Low-Income Clean Energy Connector



Spring 2022

- IPA and DCEO's Office of Community Assistance began coordination on portal discussions

July 2022

- DOE and HHS announced the portal development with Illinois as one of three pilot states, along with DC and New Mexico

June 2023

- ORISE Fellow, Adrienne Clewis, joined the team to coordinate Connector implementation
- Initial testing of State-level portal
- Met with interested LIHEAP agencies

September 2023

- Testing and training of LIHEAP Agency-level portal

Fall 2023

- Rollout of portal (LIHEAP season opens Oct 1)

ILSFA as a National Leader

ILSFA is recognized as program that is offering significant benefits to LMI customers, while providing solid consumer protections, and robust opportunities for stakeholder input.

- National Community Solar Partnership
 - States Alliance
 - Community Solar Subscription Tool
 - NCSP Community Solar Summit—January 2023
- Advancing Renewables Conference (Columbia, MO)—April 2023
 - Presented to leaders in Midwest renewables development
- National Energy and Utility Affordability Conference—June 2023
 - Presented to LIHEAP and Weatherization coordinators
- Individual conversations with states
- 2022 DOE Sunny Award Special Recognition
 - Greater Household Savings
 - Low-Income Access

Get Engaged with ILSFA



Website: <https://www.illinoissfa.com/>

Email: info@IllinoisSFA.com

Phone: **1.888.970.ISFA**



Bringing Community Perspective to Community Solar



Embarras River Basin Agency, Inc.
Helping People, Changing Lives

400 W Pleasant St, Greenup, IL 62428

Serving Clark, Coles, Crawford, Cumberland, Douglas, Edgar, Jasper, Lawrence
and Richland Counties.

Mindy Browning, CCAP, NCRI
Energy Assistance Coordinator
mindyb@erbainc.org 217-923-3113 x235

Community Perspective: Successes from IL Solar for All

- Grassroots Education
 - Training the trainer
 - Learning advantages of CS
- Vetted Solar Providers
 - Providing Customers with Solar

Community Perspective: Challenges

- Originally, finding DG vendors
- Two separate bills



Looking Ahead: National Community Solar Partnership & Connector Tool



Unpacking Community Solar in Illinois Solar for All

National Community Solar Partnership Overview

Ariel Drehobl, U.S. Department of Energy, Management and Program Analyst

July 28, 2023

What is Community Solar?

The U.S. Department of Energy defines community solar as any solar project or purchasing program, within a geographic area, in which the **benefits of a solar project flow to multiple customers** such as individuals, businesses, nonprofits, and other groups.

Community solar...

- Allows households who cannot access rooftop solar to access the benefits of solar energy (which can be due to barriers such as rooftop suitability, cost, or tenancy).
- Creates subscriptions, benefits, and/or ownership opportunities that participants can access for a portion of electricity produced.
- Typically provides participants with an electric bill credit for electricity generated by their share of the system.
- Can provide meaningful benefits such as low-income access, electric bill savings, resilience, community wealth building, and workforce opportunities.



The National Community Solar Partnership



National Community Solar Partnership Goals

- Make community solar **accessible** to every U.S. household
- Ensure community solar is **affordable** for every U.S. household
- Enable communities to realize additional **meaningful benefits** and value streams from community solar installations.



Represents an increase from **3 GW to 20 GW** of community solar capacity



\$1 billion in savings reflects an average **bill reduction of 20%**

<https://www.energy.gov/communitysolar/national-community-solar-partnership-goals>

NCSP Progress: Meaningful Benefits

NCSP has identified the following five meaningful benefits that should be included in community solar projects and programs:



GREATER HOUSEHOLD SAVINGS

- Provide a reduction in electricity bills for residential subscribers to a project



LMI HOUSEHOLD ACCESS

- Include subscribers from low- to moderate-income (LMI) households



RESILIENCE AND GRID BENEFITS

- Include the capability to deliver power to households and/or critical facilities during a grid outage or strengthen grid operations



COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

- Local community members, subscribers, or local community organizations own or have equity in the project
- Other wealth-building strategies



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Support prevailing wages and pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programming
- Ensure women- and minority-owned businesses have equitable opportunity

Pathway to Success Priorities

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE AND CAPACITY BUILDING



STATE ENGAGEMENT



ACCESS TO CAPITAL



CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH



NCSP TARGET
5 million households and \$1 billion in savings by 2025

Resulting in...

- ★ An average 20% energy bill reduction
- ★ 700% increase in community solar capacity

Meaningful benefits:

Greater household savings; LMI household access; Resilience and grid benefits; Community ownership; Workforce development and entrepreneurship

Pathway to Success Initiatives



Sunny Awards for Equitable Community Solar

In 2022, there was a \$100,000 prize competition that recognizes community solar projects and programs that employ meaningful benefits of community solar. Grand prize winners awarded in January 2023. [Learn more.](#)

Low-Income Clean Energy Connector

In 2022, work began in collaboration with partner states on a tool to connect energy assistance recipients with community solar subscriptions with consumer protections and meaningful savings. [Learn more.](#)

Community Power Accelerator

Connecting developers, investors, philanthropists, and community-based organizations to create an ecosystem of partners to deploy equitable community solar. In January 2023, launched a \$10 million prize competition to support new, emerging, and expanding developers. [Learn more.](#)

States Collaborative

Collaborative of 32 states and territories engaging in peer-learning and technical assistance support to expand state community solar markets. [Learn more.](#)

Direct Technical Assistance Program

Assistance provided through our partners to NCSP members to support policy and regulation research, project financing analysis, outreach and engagement strategies, program design, and technical issues. [Learn more.](#)



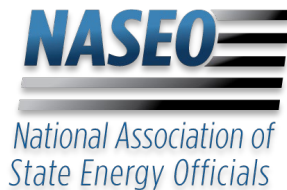
Low-Income Clean Energy Connector

Project Background and Overview

Low-Income Clean Energy Connector

NCSP is partnering with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop and pilot a digital tool that will identify and make community solar with verified savings and consumer protections more accessible to households participating in a U.S. government-run low-income support programs (i.e., the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program/LIHEAP).

Main Project Partners



Additional Project Partners

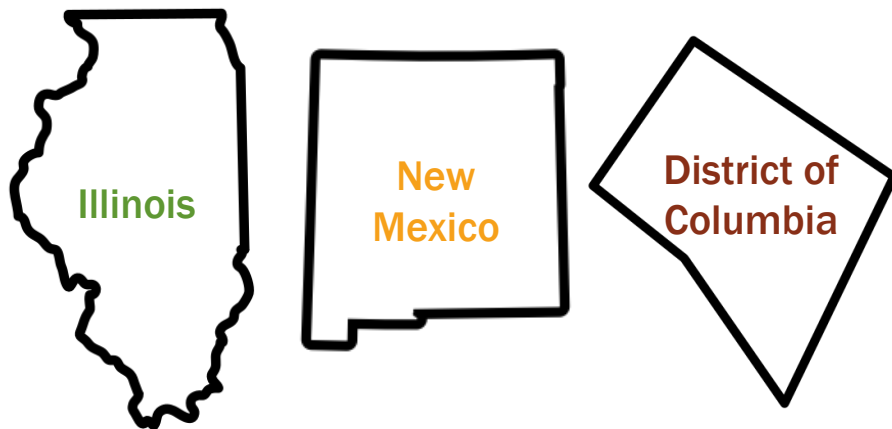


Learn more: <https://www.energy.gov/communitysolar/community-solar-subscription-tool>

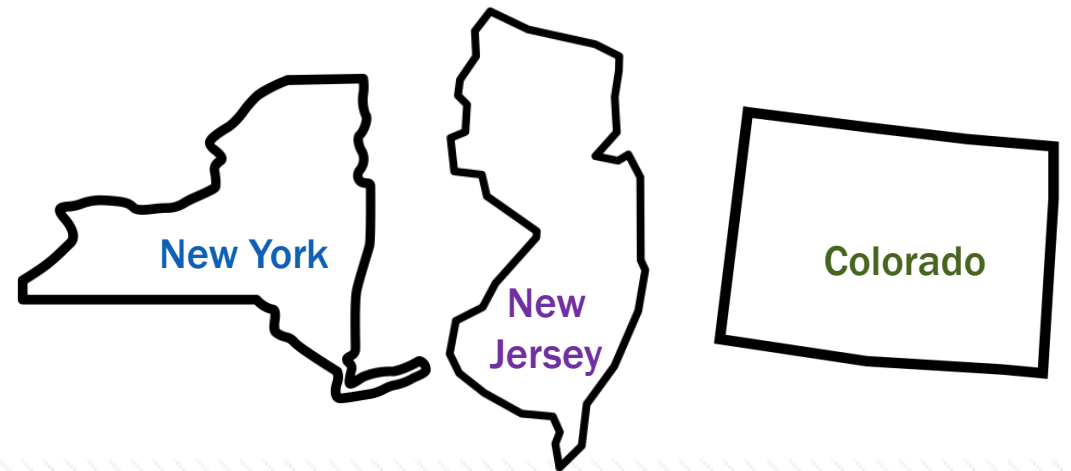
Connector Partner States

- Six states signed on in 2022 to support the initial project development
- Pilot states will initially pilot the beta tool in fall 2023
- Advising and additional states can pilot and use the connector in 2024

Pilot States/Regions



Partner States



Low Income Clean Energy Connector Goals



Lower household energy costs



Increased investor confidence



Lower Customer Acquisition costs



Expanded low income community solar market



Grow the clean energy workforce and local jobs

Illinois's Partnership

- **Continual engagement and partnership**
 - Continual meetings with the Illinois Power Agency and the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
- **Illinois Stakeholder Workshops**
 - Two workshops with stakeholders for feedback and input on the software design
 - Third workshop in planning stages for implementation
- **Illinois Fellow**
 - Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) Fellowship to support community solar and LIHEAP in IL and the success of project

Low Income Clean Energy Connector Software Development

Low Income Clean Energy Connector

Home About ▾ Contact Us

The Low Income Clean Energy Connector Tool makes community solar with verified savings and strong consumer protections more accessible to low-income households, specifically Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) recipients.

Currently, a beta version of the tool is being piloted by a few select community solar subscription managers, state community solar administrators, and LIHEAP administrators from our partner states (CO, DC, IL, NJ, NM, and NY). It is not available for public use.

Learn more about this [community solar subscription tool](#) on the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) website.

The tool is developed and maintained with funding from the Solar Energy Technologies Office within the DOE Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

[MY ACCOUNT](#)

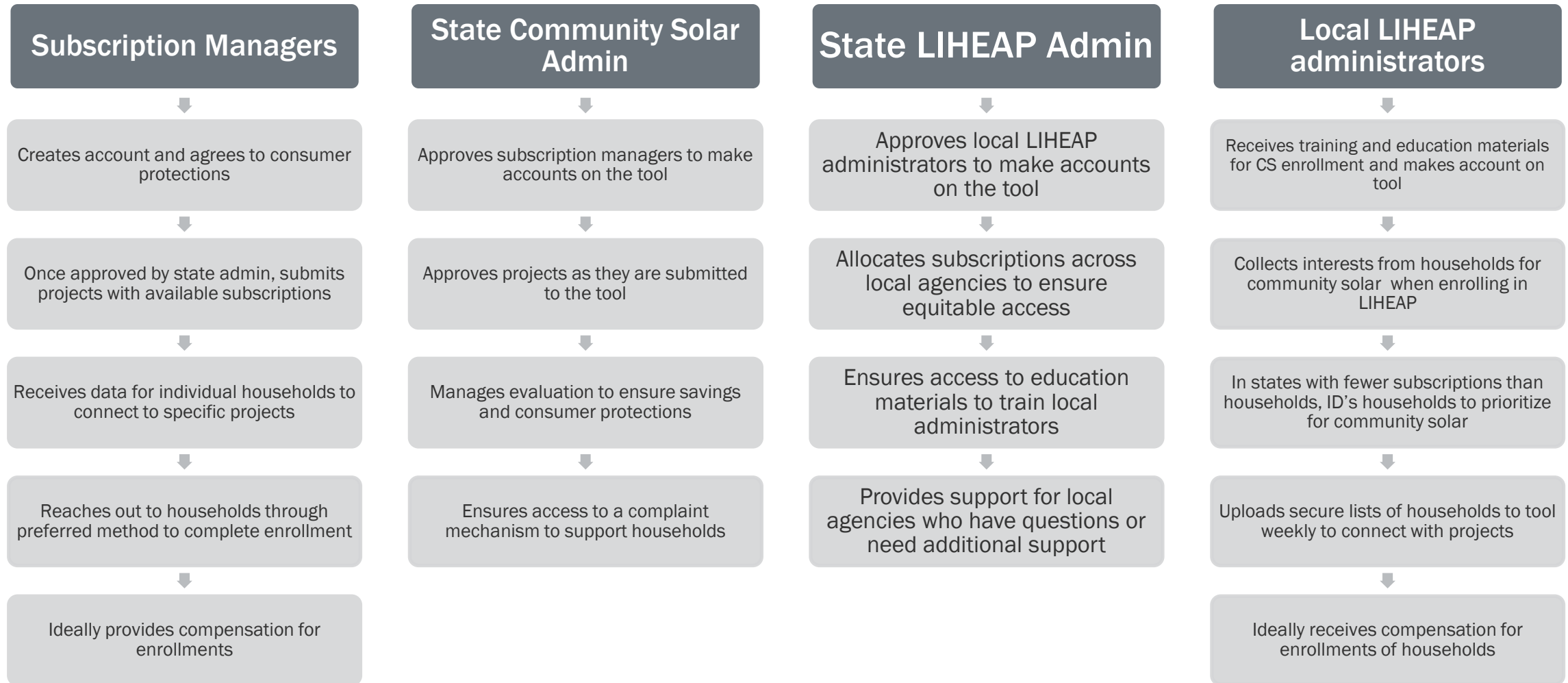
Contact Us

If you have questions or issues, please [contact us](#).

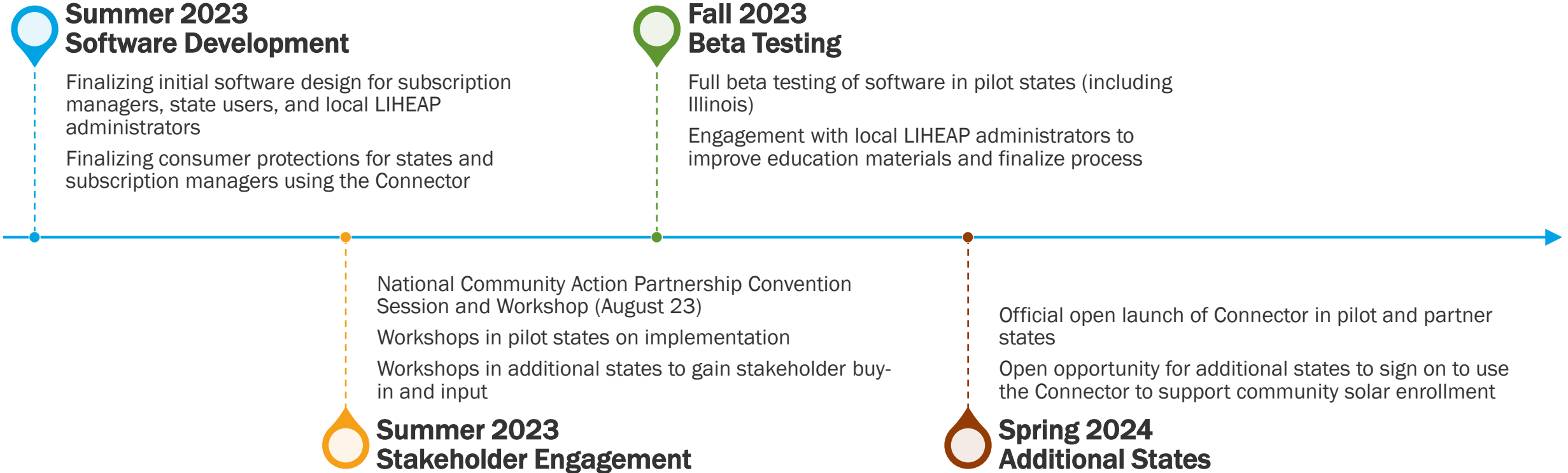
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National Renewable Energy Laboratory About Research Work With Us News Careers

Low Income Clean Energy Connector Users



Project Timeline



Want to Learn More?

1. Join the National Community Solar Partnership!

- Access to our free online networking community
- Access to our free technical assistance
- Weekly newsletter about community solar updates
- <https://www.energy.gov/communitysolar/join-national-community-solar-partnership>



2. Sign up for our Meaningful Benefits Webinar Series

- Join for an upcoming webinar and watch recording of recent webinars on community solar and meaningful benefits around low-income access, household savings, resilience, community ownership, and workforce development
- <https://www.energy.gov/communitysolar/events>

3. Join future state specific workshops for Connector!

- Reach out to Ariel (ariel.drehobl@ee.doe.gov) to be added to stakeholder lists for future engagement in Illinois in the coming months!



Q&A

Contact Us!



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