FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I have to be a Beltrami Electric member to participate?
Yes, to be eligible you must be a Beltrami Electric member with an active electric account.

What exactly am I subscribing to? Do I own part of the solar array?
You are not purchasing the physical equipment, but rather subscribing to a portion of the energy output of the solar array over twenty years.

How much does it cost to participate?
BEC members can subscribe for the output of a full panel for $1,295.00 or a half panel for $647.50.

What does this cost cover?
The cost of your panel(s) covers construction, installation and interconnection of the array. The cost also covers all maintenance and insurance expenses over the entire 20-year span of the license agreement.

What are the benefits of participating in community solar?
When you participate in community solar, you’re choosing an alternative to fossil-fuel consumption. Solar energy is clean and abundant. Additionally, monthly credits will be calculated based on the current electric rate. That means if rates go up, the value you receive from your panels’ production will too.

How much credit will I receive each month?
Your monthly credit will be calculated by dividing the entire array’s total monthly production by the portion of the array that you’ve subscribed to. The resulting kWh credit will be applied to your bill according to the current electric rate.

One full panel is projected to provide a credit of 450 kWh per year, depending on overall solar power production.

Are there incentives available for participating in community solar?
Beltrami Electric is partnering with a taxable partner who can use the tax benefit, allowing the tax advantage to be calculated into the panel price.

How much solar power can I purchase?
Residential members can purchase the output of up to 6 full panels or an amount that equals no more than the equivalent of their average annual energy usage. Commercial members can purchase the output of up to 10 full panels or an amount that equals no more than the equivalent of their average annual energy usage.

What if I move or no longer wish to participate?
In the event that you no longer wish to participate in community solar, you can gift or sell your panel(s) and credits to another BEC member.

How does community solar compare to installing solar panels on my home?
With Northern Solar, you don’t have to worry about assembling or wiring your solar power—BEC will take care of that for you. BEC will handle all maintenance requirements during the 20 year lease. All you have to do to begin receiving solar power is purchase a subscription.

Is this solar array being subsidized by members of Beltrami Electric who are not interested in community solar?
No. This project is not subsidized by the entire membership. The costs associated with the solar array are paid for.
by those who enroll. In fact, Beltrami Electric’s community solar reduces the cost shifting that typically occurs with net metered renewable generation.

What is the purpose of a Community Solar program?
To provide interested members an option to purchase renewable, locally-produced, solar energy.

Will anything be installed on my home?
No. All Equipment will be installed at Beltrami Electric Cooperative. BEC will be responsible for operating, maintaining and insuring the array for the 20-year life of the program.

If I cease to be a member, will I receive a refund?
No. However, you may elect to transfer or assign future panel production credits to another individual or entity within Beltrami Electric Cooperative’s service territory.

Will I save money by participating in the Community Solar program?
Possibly, this depends on the actual cost of electricity in the future. Based on current electrical rates, participants will actually pay more for the solar electricity they use, as currently energy produced by the solar array is more expensive than traditional energy sources. As cost of electricity increases over the term of the twenty year subscription, it is reasonable to conclude that one would save some money at some point.

If I am not saving money by participating in the Community Solar program, why would anyone participate?
Many people who participate in community solar projects do so for reasons other than financial, such as environmental concerns, supporting locally produced energy, new technologies, etc. Those purchasing a subscription are locking the price of electricity for a portion of their electrical needs for the next 20 years. If you are seeking a short term financial gain, this may not be the choice for you.

Who is this program intended for?
The program is voluntary and available to all BEC members interested in using solar renewable energy. Community solar is an affordable, low-risk way for BEC members to enjoy the benefits of solar energy without the hassle of designing, permitting, installing, maintaining and insuring their own PV solar array.

How much electricity will a panel generate?
Each panel is estimated to produce approximately 450 kWh annually, which translates into an average of about 37.5 kWh per month. A panel will produce more in the summer months and less in the winter months.

Does the Photo Voltaic (PV) system work if there is a power outage?
No. Photo Voltaic (PV) systems are tied to the grid. For safety reasons, the solar array inverter is required to sense the loss of power and then stop solar generation within a set amount of time. When the power goes out, the PV array shuts down. If the PV didn’t shut down, it could subject line-workers to electrocution by back-feeding electricity through the line.

What happens at the end of the 20-year agreement?
The member participation agreement terminates after 20 years. However, BEC will monitor and evaluate advances in solar technology to determine whether a new project would begin or an extension of the agreement would be practicable at that time.