



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 20, 2023

Community solar projects pledge substantial benefits for low-income subscribers

SANTA FE — The New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (PRC), along with program administrator InClime Inc, today announced that it expects significant benefits for low-income subscribers of the state's community solar program, after a review of last month's selection of [45 projects awards](#) to develop and build facilities in support of the program. An evaluation of the selected projects also showed a strong commitment to fostering local participation.

"The PRC is pleased with the overall response from the market showing its commitment to providing access to community solar projects and offering significant savings for low-income subscribers," said Mary Jane Parks, PRC community solar project manager. "The selected projects and New Mexico's community solar program are a model in the nation in terms of meeting the demand among low-income households to participate in community solar projects."

Following a two-month-long application solicitation period seeking proposals to develop and build solar facilities across the service areas of the state's three investor-owned utility companies (Public Service Company of New Mexico, Southwestern Public Service Company, and El Paso Electric), InClime evaluated each of the proposals using a competitive point system set in the Community Solar Rule, including benefits to local, disproportionately impacted, and low-income communities.

InClime noted that all awarded projects to build the solar facilities have pledged to allocate at least 50% capacity to low-income subscribers. In accordance with the rules of the state's community solar program, which the PRC issued last year, at least 30% of energy produced at each facility must be reserved for low-income subscribers and low-income serving organizations.

Other community solar program achievements expected to be recognized through the selection of awarded projects include:

- Elimination of additional costs: All selected projects have committed to forgoing upfront costs, early termination fees, and credit checks.
- Credit discounts: Selected projects have demonstrated their support for low-income subscribers by offering a supplementary community solar bill credit, ranging from 27% to 30%, for at least five years.

- Procurement preferences: The program administrator recognized the importance of community involvement and economic empowerment by awarding bonus points to projects that integrated New Mexican-owned businesses into their ownership structure.

“In a rigorous and highly competitive selection process, a handful of projects were awarded capacity, demonstrating remarkable dedication to creating outstanding initiatives with a strong focus on resident business structures and equitable benefits,” said Miana Campbell, InClime’s community solar lead for New Mexico. “Prioritizing equity and economic empowerment, the program fosters inclusivity among communities statewide, and establishes New Mexico’s program as an exemplary model for other states to follow.”

The PRC is committed to providing a voice to low-income serving organizations that collaborate with developers to fulfill capacity on each project, safeguarding consumer interests and promoting transparency in the program, while reaching out to eligible low-income utility customers. To assist in these measures, InClime, along with its partner the Coalition of Sustainable Communities New Mexico, has been facilitating monthly Low-Income Working Group meetings with low-income serving organizations. The goal of these meetings is to ensure that the community solar program will provide clear communication, meaningful benefits, and equitable access to qualified low-income households. Low-income serving organizations that would like to learn more about participating in the working group are encouraged to complete this [form](#).

These community solar projects can be a viable option for low-income participants because they offer savings, no upfront costs, and no penalty for ending a subscription to a community solar facility when compared to traditional solar options. Any household with income less than 80% of the area median income is eligible as a low-income subscriber. Households that are receiving benefits through Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, and first-time homeowner and house rehabilitation programs are pre-qualified to subscribe.

Created by the Community Solar Act, the community solar program was designed so that qualifying utility customers – homeowners, renters, and certain organizations – can save on electricity bills and reduce their carbon footprint by connecting to solar energy-producing facilities, which can be a boon for households and businesses that are unable to install solar panels on their property.

The total statewide power generation of the program will have an initial cap of 200 megawatts, allocated among the state’s three investor-owned utility companies (El Paso Electric Company, 30 MW; Public Service Company of New Mexico, 125 MW; and Southwestern Public Service Company, 45 MW).

An online version of this release is available [here](#).

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