

The Economic Impact of Community Solar

Accelerating Jobs, Private Investment, and Local Economic Growth at Unmatched Speed

Introduction

Community solar isn't just delivering clean energy and consumer savings—it's one of the most affordable and effective tools we have to drive local economic growth in America. At a time when utility bills are climbing and families are feeling the strain, community solar offers a faster, cheaper way to expand clean energy access—especially for those who need it most.

Unlike large-scale utility projects, community solar is uniquely positioned to be deployed quickly, at scale, and in communities that are often left behind. It brings affordable energy options directly to renters, small businesses, landowners, and low-to-moderate income families—helping lower monthly bills while building energy resilience. And it does all this without requiring major upfront costs from participants or taxpayers.

By generating local energy closer to where it's used, community solar reduces strain on the grid, attracts billions in private investment, and creates thousands of local jobs—particularly in rural communities and underserved urban areas. At the same time, it boosts U.S. energy independence and gives states a practical solution to meet rising energy demand from electrification, data centers, and climate-driven extremes.

On average, **750 MW of community solar development delivers approximately \$2.1 billion in economic impact and creates over 14,000 local jobs**, according to state-level studies across the U.S. The takeaway is simple: the faster states adopt and expand community solar, the faster they unlock not only clean energy—but also meaningful affordability and economic opportunity.



Economic Impact of Community Solar

Estimate provided for 750MW program, projects are typically 5MW



\$2.1 billion
Local
Economic
Investment



14,000
New Jobs

State and National Economic Impact Highlights

- **Washington State: \$1.76 Billion Boost with Strong Policy Support**
A University of Washington study found that with enabling policies in place, developing 500 MW of community solar over 10 years would generate \$1.76 billion in gross state product, 16,521 job-years, and \$76 million in state tax revenue—while also reducing emissions and supporting rural landowners with lease payments.¹
- **California: \$12 Billion in Economic Impact**
Community solar development could deliver \$12 billion in economic impact to California, including 25,000 full-time jobs.²
- **Colorado: \$1.4 Billion in Investment and Thousands of Jobs**
The state’s community solar program has attracted over \$1.4 billion in private investment and created thousands of jobs, especially in rural and underserved communities.³
- **New Mexico: \$517 Million in Total Economic Impact**
New Mexico’s Community Solar Program is projected to generate \$517 million in economic impact and create 3,760 jobs in its first phase.⁴
- **Virginia: \$5.6 Billion in Economic Activity**
The Shared Solar program in Virginia is expected to result in \$5.6 billion in economic activity, 46,000 jobs, and \$1.2 billion in tax revenue over its lifetime.⁵



- **Wisconsin: \$2.8 Billion in Local Economic Benefits**
Legislation to authorize community solar in Wisconsin could create 18,000 jobs and \$2.8 billion in local economic impact.⁶
- **Pennsylvania: \$1.8 Billion and 11,000 Jobs**
Community solar legislation could generate \$1.8 billion in economic impact for Pennsylvania and create 11,000 jobs—primarily in construction, land management, and operations.⁷
- **Ohio: \$5.57 Billion in Economic Impact from Community Solar**
A Community Solar Pilot Program could generate 1,750 MW of community solar projects and result in \$5.57 billion in total economic activity and support 27,000 job-years across Ohio.⁸
- **National: \$120 Billion in Economic Value from Shared Solar**
A 2023 national study estimates that fully unlocking shared solar could drive \$120 billion in total economic value, including new jobs and private investment.⁹

Where Smart Policy Meets Real Economic Results

Community solar offers more than just clean energy—it’s a catalyst for economic growth that reaches every corner of a state. The evidence is clear: when state leaders create policies that unlock community solar development, they unleash billions in economic investment, tens of thousands of jobs, and real, sustained benefits for local communities.

By enabling participation from renters, small businesses, farmers, and lower-income households, community solar drives inclusive economic growth—empowering people to be part of the solution while strengthening the grid and local economies. The message is simple: if you’re looking to jumpstart your state’s economy, start with community solar.

¹ University of Washington Evans School of Public Policy & Governance, *Economic Impacts of Community Solar in Washington State* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington, January 2025), <https://www.washington.edu/uw-news/2025/01/07/new-study-community-solar-could-bring-billions-to-washington/>

² Coalition for Community Solar Access and EQ Research, *Economic Impact Map – California AB 2316*, 2023.

³ Coalition for Community Solar Access, *State Market Snapshot – Colorado*, 2024.

⁴ *New Mexico Community Solar Economic Impact Report*, The Lucas Group, 2021.

⁵ Virginia Commonwealth University, *Estimating the Economic Benefits of Community Solar in Virginia*, 2023.

⁶ *Economic Analysis of Community Solar in Wisconsin*, GridLab & Wisconsin Conservative Energy Forum, 2023.

⁷ Pennsylvania State University Center for Economic and Community Development, *The Economic Impact of Community Solar in Pennsylvania*, 2020.

⁸ Ohio University Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs, *Economic Impact Analysis of a Community Solar Program in the State of Ohio*, 2023.

⁹ SEIA, Vote Solar, and GTM Research, *U.S. Shared Renewables: Development, Policy, and Outlook*, 2023.