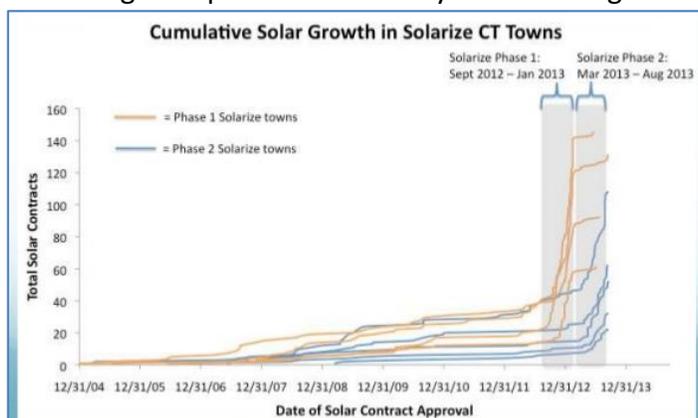


MUNICIPAL CLIMATE ACTION OPPORTUNITY

SOLARIZING YOUR TOWN

Community-based Solarize programs which accelerate adoption of rooftop solar are starting to spring up in Pennsylvania. These town- or neighborhood-specific endeavors, offered on a limited time basis, help create an attractive tipping point for consumers. Rooftop solar prices have tumbled dramatically, by about 70% in the last decade¹, making solar economically sensible for many homeowners for the first time. Even so, the up-front cost, the selection of a reliable contractor, and the lack of familiarity with the technology hold back many households. To address these barriers, Solarize initiatives make going solar affordable and easy, offering group discounts on pricing, along with a soup-to-nuts program that includes pre-qualified installers and a standardized enrollment process. Early on, Solarize programs typically focused on residential customers exclusively, but now tend to include small businesses as well.

Solarize initiatives may arise with or without the sponsorship of the local municipality. Communities that have elected to sponsor the programs have done so to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enable their citizens and small businesses to take advantage of the group discounts. The results of Solarize programs are striking: adoption rates can skyrocket during the typical five month period that a Solarize program is open for enrollment. As an example, the Solarize Allegheny program in western Pennsylvania received more than 700 requests for price quotes in 2016 and has installed over 100 systems in two consecutive seasons. In 2014, prior to the program's start, only 18 rooftop solar installations existed in the county.



Source: Solarize Connecticut

Typical features of a Solarize program:

- A limited-time offer, usually from spring to fall of one year
- Educational workshops to explain the program to the public
- Discounted group pricing, often with prices decreasing as more consumers enroll
- Attractive financing (often no money down, but these offers vary)
- All work is performed by pre-screened, certified contractors who were selected by the Solarize sponsors through a competitive bid process
- Immediate and lasting reductions in utility bills and electric usage
- Lowered carbon footprint with no loss in comfort
- An easy, all-inclusive process from start to finish for participating consumers.

¹ Solar Energy Industries Association, "Growth In Solar is Led by Falling Prices, at <http://www.seia.org/research-resources/solar-industry-data>

MUNICIPAL CLIMATE ACTION OPPORTUNITY



Where to get more information

The Solarize Guidebook, the first authoritative guidebook of its kind is available at <http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy12osti/54738.pdf>

Planning and Implementing a Solarize Initiative is available at <http://www.cesa.org/resource-library/resource/planning-and-implementing-a-solarize-initiative-a-guide-for-state-program-managers>

Additional guides can be accessed through the website of **Community Power Network**.

<http://communitypowernetwork.com/bulkpurchase>

One of the 100+ homes participating in the Solarize Allegheny program.

Solarize Allegheny is a very recent, and the largest, Solarize initiative to date in Pennsylvania. <http://www.solarizeallegheny.org/>

Solarize Media is another Pennsylvania-based initiative, backed by the Delaware County Planning Commission and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. <https://transitiontownmedia.org/volunteer/working-groups/solarize/>

Solarize Center City is an active Solarize program in Philadelphia, organized by a residents' association there. <http://www.solarizecentercity.com/>

New York state has multiple solar promotions underway, some using the Solarize name and others operating under other titles. <https://www.nysenda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Programs/NY-Sun/Customers/Solarize-Campaign-Map>

Two solar firms that have been central to the Solarize programs in Pennsylvania are Smartpower and Solar States. The Mid-Atlantic Renewable Energy Association [MAREA] also provides a list of **solar installers**. These businesses might be prospective partners for municipalities interested in establishing new solarize programs.

<http://smartpower.org/>

<http://www.solar-states.com/>

[http://www.themarea.org/downloads/marea_directory_pennsylvania_solar_installers\(May%202016\).pdf](http://www.themarea.org/downloads/marea_directory_pennsylvania_solar_installers(May%202016).pdf)

Municipalities interested in fostering solar in other ways can do so by streamlining the permitting process for solar equipment. Solarize Westchester developed a **guide for municipalities interested in reducing barriers to solar**. <http://www.solarizewestchester.com.php56-5.ord1-1.websitetestlink.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Solar-Barrier-Removal-Guide-FINAL-2015-Dec.pdf>

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) also has recommendations on **how local governments can improve permitting of solar systems** for residential and commercial sites. <http://www.dvrpc.org/EnergyClimate/SolarReady/Permitting/>