Rev2.1 3/8/2023 update

NOTE: following are questions in "Chat" during the February 16, 2023 webinar on Community Solar.
Last names (except presenter and host) are deleted for privacy.
We have attempted to provide written answers to almost all questions, below. ALSO, see JCP&L “[Frequently Asked Questions](https://www.firstenergycorp.com/content/dam/supplierservices/files/community-solar---nj/community-solar-faqs-subscriber.pdf)”
Answers (A:) in red, were originally written by Steve Miller (webinar host) to the best of his knowledge/memory, and now include annotations, corrections, and enhancements by Yvette. (These answers are NOT reviewed and endorsed by either Solar Landscape or Arcadia)
The time stamps are the point in the recording when that particular question was typed.
Initial questions were answered in a mid-presentation break. Remaining questions were answered in the last 20 minutes.

[RESOURCES](https://www.sustainablejersey.com/fileadmin/media/Actions_and_Certification/Actions/Energy/Community_Solar_Resources.pdf): Community Solar sign-up Portal- eventually includes all Solar Projects; Fact Sheets; How-to Guide, Year 1 Case Studies,……
[Interactive Map](https://www.easymapmaker.com/map/NJCommunitySolar) of active and planned NJ Community Solar sites.
[Signup](https://visitor.r20.constantcontact.com/manage/optin?v=0014Ogu2wnBvl-XKzALEMAxRqHXXZqN78wNyahRWbOreRRMtzq_QzwtCSVAeJ4-mvFkT6N7t6li4b2ily245mPK4mgCm526sVwxeLTMuDEczbXsWNnbNW5-uaGr13UlCdFyZbbBJyYEZgc-2_ROMk5lMhNqpegTPEIa) for NJ Clean Energy Program mailing lists (listservs)

01:07 **PRESENTER CONTACT INFO**: Yvette Viasus, yvette@solarlandscape.com, 862-324-2320

10:11 Holly: Pat & Steve - I know I signed up for community solar (through JCP&L) around the same time as you did, so I’m wondering if you’ve been assigned a solar farm yet? I have not. Thank you for all your work to educate us! **A: I (Steve) am still waiting. HOWEVER Yvette just encouraged me to sign in to my account in Arcadia.com (once there, click on the “solar” link). I was very pleased to see I am assigned to TintonFalls 2 (but no public date is shown) The expected waitlist time depends on the project energization date, project churn, and the subscriber’s expected energy usage. Assuming there’s a project already in your area that still has capacity and will be energized in three months you can expect to receive credit in 4-5 months.**

11:05 Nadine : What is the incentive for a business to allow their rooftop to be used for a community solar project **A: The business receives income from leasing their rooftop. (There may be an indirect incentive from solar panels blocking sunlight from warehouse rooftop which might extend roof life, and reduce HVAC costs)**

12:12 Susan : How long is the wait if you are not low or moderate income? **A: Maybe 5 (maybe greater) months wait (see above answer). I suspect there might eventually be a wait list of non-LMI subscribers, if the subscription data shows insufficient pace of LMI subcribers to meet the 51% LMI subscribers required by the NJ BPU.**

12:24 Nan : How does the developer select the location? What is the relationship between the developer and property owner**? A: all new warehouse rooftops are required to be "solar ready" per NJ Building Code effective in 2022. Solar developers are likely anticipating the future of Community Solar (in 1Q2023, the NJ BPU expects to release a “straw proposal” of final rules) and are likely already shopping for future sites. Solar developers lease rooftops from property owners. The Community Solar contract is between the Community Solar subscriber and the solar developer who owns the rooftop solar.**

13:09 Joshua: You may already plan on covering the logistics but if not, please explain how the billing works---Arcadia told me that they would "manage my bill" but their google reviews show problems with that. Also, I already have a 3rd party provider (Inspire Clean Energy) that is supposed to be selling the equivalent of my usage of clean energy to the grid--this sounds like "double dipping". How does it work with third party power suppliers. **A: Arcadia currently issues a "Summary" bill, auto-debits the subscriber bank account, and pays the subscriber’s monthly electric utility bill by its due date. The subscriber can always access their utility account online and see their bills with the same details as before. See footnote\*\***

14:55 Holly : Does the community solar provider bill me for both the amount of energy I use and the JCP&L charges for getting the energy to me (or are there 2 separate bills - 1 from the third party solar provider and 1 from JCP&L)? Thank you! **There is currently one monthly bill for subscribers through Arcadia.com- see above answers**

15:33 Caroline The questions that Joshua is asking, I have too. I appreciate any info you can give us.
**A:** **See footnote\*\***

17:02 David: How do I learn what community solar opportunities are in my zip code?
**A:** [**https://www.solarlandscape.com/**](https://www.solarlandscape.com/) **For further directions, see question at** 56:01

17:17 Enis: What happens at night when sun isn’t shining? Can I sign up to a clean electricity source for that part of my usage? **A: Yes, you can subscribe to 3rd party renewable electricity (wind-power would provide more constant electricity 24 hours/day). See footnote \*\*. Subscribers to NJ Community Solar receive a portion of the annual predicted solar production (from their assigned solar source) to provide their annual predicted electrical usage. The grid supplies all electricity when the sun does not shine, and the grid supplies a portion of the electricity in winter to make up for deficiencies when the solar production is less than yearly average. See question 4 of JCP&L** [**Frequently Asked Questions**](https://www.firstenergycorp.com/content/dam/supplierservices/files/community-solar---nj/community-solar-faqs-subscriber.pdf)**, which states the Community Solar credit appears under the charges from JCP&L section of the bill. I think this implies the credit does NOT apply to the NON JCP&L charges such as another clean electricity source.**

**This question is quite deep. The use of averages for solar generation and electrical usage over simplifies the complexity of reaching “net zero” GHG emissions. The NJ grid is currently about 50% “clean” electricity (after accounting for the RPS mandated purchases of renewable electricity - see** [**https://electric.smiller.org**](https://electric.smiller.org)**. Many large businesses use MUCH greater effort to always use renewable electricity at lowest cost: they contract directly with clean energy sources, and buy clean electricity to meet their electrical needs (and also shift loads and add/use electrical storage as needed) on an hour to hour continual basis year-round.**

17:09 David: Can I assume that each community solar project delivers its own discount? **A: The NJ BPU may be influencing what appears to be uniformity of energy credits across the many Community Solar locations. However, there is a separate contract between each subscriber and their own community solar DEVELOPER/OWNER that specifies the energy credit discount.**

17:24 David : I assume community solar uses distribution lines only. If this is true, is there an agreement between the community solar entity and the utility for the community solar’s contribution in maintaining/upgrading the distribution lines? **A: According to Yvette, the 21% discount is only seen on the energy SUPPLY portion of the bill. The Distribution charge (electric utility distribution support) must be fully paid**.

19:24 David: This is FANTASTIC!

19:28 Andrew : We are already Arcadia customers. How do we see what the impact to our billing is if we add solarlandscape to our existing Arcadia agreement? There's no detail on the Arcadia web site. **A: call or write Arcadia support**

19:51 Joshua : So, it sounds like JCP&L will send a bill only for delivery, you'd have no 3rd party provider on your electric bill and the community solar bill would be 21% less than the power supply portion -- and is that using the "cost to compare" or whatever they call it? **A: JCPL and other local utilities work with the community solar developers and subscription management companies to allocate and apply the community solar credits to the subscribers bill. These credits are seen on the supply portion of the utility bill. Arcadia receives the utility bill and the community solar bill and summarizes the two to give to the subscriber. See JCP&L** [**Frequently Asked Questions**](https://www.firstenergycorp.com/content/dam/supplierservices/files/community-solar---nj/community-solar-faqs-subscriber.pdf) **# 4.**

20:18 Helene : Can non-profits and religious organizations subscribe to community solar? **A: Yes, although if they are on a commercial meter they may have to contact the developer and be evaluated on a case by case basis.**

21:29 Gerald: Does the solar array on the roof help cool the building, just by putting more stuff between the incoming heat and the building? **A: likely.**

22:56 Holly : How is this being paid for the installation and for maintenance of the solar projects? Is it thru our taxes? **A: Installation, maintenance, operating expenses of each community solar project is budgeted by the developer/owner of the solar project. That developer receives 30% tax credit (paid by U.S. taxpayers), accelerated depreciation (paid by taxpayers), and also receives SREC-2 payments. The SREC-2 is paid from the RPS (Renewable Portfolio Standard- mandated by NJ legislation), which is paid by each electric utility, and is tacked into bills paid by utility ratepayers/customers. The federal and state intent is to dramatically increase solar deployment. When goals are reached, subsidies will disappear.**

23:56 David : Once a community solar is at full capacity with subscribers, will there be a waiting list for those who wish to join once an opening becomes available? **A: Arcadia provides a waiting list. If you wish to be put on a Solar Landscape waiting list you can go to www.arcadia.com/sl21 (The BPU requirement for 51% LMI might influence the wait list. See 3rd question in this Chat)**

23:58 Enis : Once this program becomes permanent, what will be the limiting factors in installing solar energy? Labor, solar panels, financing? **A: The "Final" Community Solar rules are not yet published by the NJ BPU (based partly on results of this current year 2 Community Solar pilot). My guess is the siting requirements will be most limiting- for instance scarce availability of desired locations, such as brownfields & large roofs.**

25:34 Margaret : A lot of rental owners suggest/ require a certain provider based on the area. Will the owners allow renters to use this program? And if so is it possible to make leasing offices aware of the program to give info to their residents? **A: As long as renters have their name on the electricity bill and pay it they don’t have to get permission by the owners to use this program especially since participation in this program does not interfere with their electricity provider. Even without this issue it would be a good idea for leasing offices to be aware of the program to have them encourage their tenants to take advantage of the opportunity. The electrical SOURCE can be provided by your subscription to a 3rd party licensed company. This continues unchanged with your subscription to Community Solar. For details, see footnote \*\***

27:13 Holly : Does Solar Landscape work with JCP&L or only PSE&G? **A: Solar Landscape has projects in JCP&L, PSE&G, and Atlantic City Electric territories.**

27:59 Robert : If we have solar panels which supply most of our power, can we subscribe to community solar for the rest? **A: Yvette said PSEG does not allow Community Solar for rooftop solar owners. And she said that to date, JCP&L has not limited private solar owners from also buying Community Solar. However,** ”NJAC 14:8-9.6.1 specifies that a customer’s total net-metered production, including both behind-the-meter generation and community solar generation, cannot exceed 100 percent of annual consumption. Existing net energy metering generator will most likely reduce or limit how large the total subscriptions can be.”

29:05 Robert : Is Solar Landscape working on storage for 100% solar 24h/day? **A: Solar Landscape is considering storage to combine with our community solar projects.**

29:07 Gerald The Catholic Archdiocese of Newark has put solar arrays on many of their school buildings. Do you know if this was done via community solar? **A. Not yet likely. Over several years, many schools around NJ have installed rooftop solar. I believe schools are signing a standard contract with a solar installer who leases the roof from the school, does NOT charge for installation, continues to own the solar, and charges the school for the electrical production at a discount compared to local utility. I see a similarity to today’s NJ Community Solar. The one difference is the Community Solar panels are placed on a leased roof of a distant building**

30:34 Robert : Why is the project life only 21 years? A**: Panel efficiency usually goes down enough around the 20-25 year mark to encourage developers to retire or donate the panels to other projects. Also, technology improvements in 20 years will make it more attractive to replace solar cells with higher efficiency models.**

30:41 Holly : May you please ask Yvette to address the billing again. I did not quite follow it. If I signed up through Arcadia, will Arcadia bill me for the amount of energy I use, and JCP&L bill me for their services in getting the energy to me? Thank you. **A: Arcadia currently pays the JCP&L monthly bill, provides a "summary" statement of that month's Community Solar discount, and withdraws the difference from the subscriber’s bank account.**

31:20 Caroline : Can we go visit “our” solar array? **A: Yes/No. I wouldn’t try because of constant truck traffic. Solar array name and address is known, and shown on the contract between subscriber and the solar owner/developer. BUT, the warehouse and grounds are private property, and the solar panels will be impossible to view from ground level. “Google Earth” might reveal the solar panels.**

31:56 Holly : What is the average wait list time? **A: The expected waitlist time depends on the project energization date, project churn, and the subscriber’s expected energy usage. Assuming there’s a project already in your area that still has capacity and will be energized in three months you can expect to receive credit in 4-5 months.**

32:18 Andrew: Agree on the Arcadia consolidated bill - it has very little detail. **A: more detailed billing is coming.**

34:49 Andrew : Is the wait period shorter if you are already an Arcadia customer? **A; likely, since Arcadia customers likely already have established an auto-bill pay arrangement with Arcadia.**

35:02 Joshua: You don't have Sussex County listed but when I put my zip code (07843--Hopatcong) into the website, it said that it was available here. **A: : You will notice that solarlandscape.com will give you the following messaging associated with that zip code “Hmm… Solar Landscape community solar isn’t available in your zip code yet, but we’re working on it!**[Sign up today](http://www.arcadia.com/sl21) **and you’ll be on your way to saving.” The website then prompts you to still sign up on arcadia’s website for when we do have a project available in that zip code.**

35:19 Holly : Since JCPL only works with Arcadia, is Solar Landscape one of the community solar farms that participates with Arcadia.. OR, as JCPL customers, can we sign up with Solar Landscape instead of through Arcadia? **A: Solar Landscape is the installer/owner of 54Community Solar systems. Solar Landscape is employing Arcadia for billing/credit for all its community solar subscribers. JCPL and other utilities work with all the approved developers and subscriber organizations in the state.**

35:36 Nadine: This program seems almost too good to be true… with such a significant discount.
Are you running into resistance because people might not think it’s legitimate? **A: Yes**

00:35:39 Thor: Reacted to "You don't have Susse..." with 👍

0036:17 Nan: What actions can people on this call take now to either bring community solar to our city or find out if there is an existing project that services our area? **A: your city "Green Team" may be able to identify suitable local sites, and attract Community Solar developers. Solarlandscape.com and energysage.com currently provide that "lookup" service. In maybe a couple of months, a NJ-wide portal (sponsored by NJ BPU and "Sustainable Jersey") will provide the "lookup" service. See question at** 44:32

36:34 Thor : Reacted to "What actions can peo..." with 👍

37:24 Andrew: Re: wait times - We're looking into installing our own solar panels too, and that wait time is about 8 months from signing to producing energy.

38:46 Thor : Reacted to "This program seems a..." with 👍

40:12 Joshua: That's 30 cents per kilowatt hour after the discount-- double what I'm now paying to JCP&L and Inspire Clean Energy. Do the utilities raise their rates before discounting them? **A: Yvette made up the data on the slide, which is meant to show the format. If you’d like to know what the community solar credit is comprised of you can see here: N.J.A.C. 14:8-9.7(a): “the calculation of the value of the bill credit shall be set at retail rate, inclusive of supply and delivery charges.”, N.J.A.C. 14:8-9.7(c): “The credit may not be applied to non-bypassable charges. (**[**https://njcleanenergy.com/renewable-energy/programs/community-solar/bill-credits**](https://njcleanenergy.com/renewable-energy/programs/community-solar/bill-credits) **) NOTE: the above states the Delivery charge will generate a solar discount!!!**

41:00 Helene : I’ve started the application. It says you have to enter your JCPL username AND password. Is this correct? **A: yes, you need an electronic bill-paying account with JCP&L.**

42:49 Enis What kind of minimum surface area would make it feasible for a project to be built? This info will help us to ask local biz to offer their rooftops for u to build solar. **A: Generally over 30,000 sq feet is an ideal size for a community solar project. More accuracy requires a little homework: Look up the NJ BPU Community Solar min and max KW requirements. Look at the developer proposals (for min and max) for Community Solar trial Year 1 and trial Year 2 to see what sizes were economical to propose. Then google for calculation of surface area required for the min and max sizes.**

43:03 Helene: What portion of your typical utility bill is covered with the program - 100% of historical usage? **A: Estimates start with around 80-90% of the subscriber’s previous year of actual usage, and then is adjusted with yearly updates.**

43:24 Holly : Wait…how is the energy usage divided up between community solar and another third party supplier (like CleanChoice)? **A: see footnote \*\***

44:26 Holly: Why doesn't the utility just give the solar credit to all of its customers for the projects in the areas? **A: the NJ BPU regulates and sets parameters for this program. The utility must comply with the state program but the energy generated by these projects will reduce the energy generated by the utility.**

44:32 Sidney : I live in Essex and have a roof not suitable for solar even tho I am willing to pay for it. Can I join some other existing Community Solar? **A: if Community Solar is not currently available, it may be in future years, if developers provide it. Apply and get on a wait list.**

44:35 Neil : I'm in Sussex County and Arcadia tells me that community solar is available. Is that energy from a different solar company? **A: It could be from a different solar company or it could be that they will place you on a waitlist for when a project becomes available.**

45:07 Thor : Reacted to "I'm in Sussex County..." with 👍

46:39 Frank : If I know about a light industrial project that is in the early stages of approval in my town, what do I do to try to encourage the incorporation of a community solar project on their rooftop. **A. Go to your town’s planning board meetings and encourage the board to bring up community solar feasibility to the developer.**

46:12 Thor : Reacted to "If I know about a li..." with 👍

46:16 Marge : Arcadia sign-up requires giving them our JCP&L account name and password. Understandable, I guess, but seems like a security issue. User experience? **A: Arcadia’s system is one of the nation leading subscription services. Solar Landscape pays a premium for their services because they have vetted them as the best option for their subscribers. I have not heard of security problems**

51:37 Joshua : Is this bill representative? It is 30 cents per kwh after the discount--that's double JCP&L. **A: see earlier Q & Answer. Yvette made up numbers to show the overall format in this early slide.**

52:36 Edward : How do you balance credits during the year; create much more electricity & credits during summer than cloudy winter. **A: The accounting process starts with an average production per year, and the average usage for each subscriber. Higher summer solar production is applied to load during lower winter production. In month’s where the project produces too much energy to allocate that month the developer will “bank” a credit to later apply in lower energy production months. See earlier Q&A.**

54:07 Robert Where is the Hazlet project? **A: see address at 72:09**

56:01 Robert : Does the Solar Landscaping web zipcode method mean that a zipcode entered at Solar Landscape but redirecting to Arcadia means that I would just be wait listed with no project? **A: the initial popup from https://SolarLandscape.com, indicates whether or not a Solar Landscape project is (or will be) available for that zip code. Yvette believes this is accurate for the 54 projects owned by Solar Landscape. Here are Steve’s *directions: In box labeled “Save at least 15%”: enter zipcode ; if popup states ”Congratulations…” then “Select your utility company” (This will be community solar built by Solar Landscape; your data and any special promotions are auto- passed to Arcadia for signup.)*
OR *If popup states “Community Solar isn’t available” then click “Sign Up Today” to join the queue for your municipality. This will be Community Solar from a different developer, because Arcadia’s services are available to everyone (signup is handled by Arcadia).*
The forthcoming BPU/Sustainable Jersey portal (maybe in a couple of months) will hopefully remedy these problems (see previous questions). You can also view private energy marketplace data like energysage.com/communitysolar which gives data for developers that get into a referral agreement with energysage**

57:09 Enis : How long is the 21% discount guaranteed for? Is it a yearly agreement? Will it come down in the future years? **A: the 21% is stated in the contract, and is guaranteed for as long as you are in the program.**

59:57 Holly : Do we get a bigger discount if we sign up through solar landscape or through Arcadia? Or, are they the same? **A: I think it best to first enter on the SolarLandscape.com site. Reason: the SolarLandscape promotional discounts (and any energy credits) are passed to the Arcadia.com site for processing without change**. **However, some of the projects managed by Arcadia have much lower discounts.**

60:57 Neil : Reacted to "If I know about a li..." with 👍

60:59 Robert : What is the 21% discount from? What is the rate per KWH? Is it fixed for a multiple month period or otherwise? Does the rate per KWH vary from month to month and if so what drives it higher or lower? **A: The 21% is the discount off the community solar energy/credit allocated to your bill. The discount is experienced for every month you receive a community solar credit.**

65:10 Joshua : Do you reevaluate "historical usage" periodically? I recently had mini-splits installed and I'm using them for some of my heat (using more electricity, less propane) so I'm using more than my previous usage. **A: Yvette is confident that ongoing changes in subscriber load will be accommodated and reevaluated every year for reductions due to energy efficiency, or increases (heat pumps, EVs,..)**

66:02 Robert : Do I have to subscribe to a fixed amount of electricity per month? What if I use less than that amount? **A With 1000 subscribers, these individual variations become less significant. Yvette discussed starting with yearly average load and yearly average solar production. The solar allocation is not fixed and varies on the expected usage for that month. In months where the subscriber uses less energy than the solar allocated to them, the community solar developer would hold off onto the additional credits as a “banked” credit for your account and apply it in a later month where the community solar credit couldn’t cover the entire utility costs. Summer solar peak production is carried forward to cover winter solar production deficits. I am sure there will be wrinkles. But I feel confident I will receive a nice solar cumulative yearly credit (but likely not 21% of total).**

66:24 Nadine: I’ve seen Solar Landscape signs at Duke Farms in Hillsborough. Is a community solar project in the works there? **A: Solar Landscape built a dual use agrovoltaics solar project for Duke Farms. This is not a community solar project and instead a project for Duke Farms energy usage. The project will be open for education and demonstrations soon if you’re interested in learning more.**

66:30 Bill : I have had community solar at my house in NY state for 2 years. It’s great! I get two bills and only a 10% discount but still am very happy with it. Can’t wait until it’s available for my house in Somerset County. **A: Solar Landscape currently has several projects serving Somerset County. Feel free to see if one of them serves your zip code by using solarlandscape.com**

66:53 Enis: Would school children be a conduit to recruit LMI customers? Are you pursuing to make presentations in schools? **A: Solar Landscape has made presentations to schools and is always looking for more schools to engage LMI communities.**

69:19 Neil : How can we bring projects to Sussex County?. **A:** **Encourage owners of large warehouses or brownfields to talk to community solar developers.**

69:37 Enis : Is it possible to use those solar panels for local purposes when the grid goes down like it did during Sandy? **A: Community Solar uses the grid to conduct electricity to your house. There is no provision for a microgrid which is self-sustaining when it disconnects from the larger grid.**

70:50 David : Is all of my electricity coming from Solar Landscape or just a portion? If just a portion, how do I know what percentage? **A: The intent is that the average annual load of subscribers to a particular Community Solar Project is close to the average annual solar production. BUT clouds, night, and winter creates deficits (less solar than load), and at summer peak there will be more solar than load. The grid will constantly be the source or sink as required.**

70:55 Joshua : At least in Hopatcong, it was local transmission lines that were down (lots of trees down) after Sandy so no matter what was fed to the grid, nothing was getting to the customer (for close to 2 weeks)

72:09 Yvette Viasus: **the HAZLET Community Solar project is at 1110-1170 NJ Route 36**

72:25 Enis : How do we get Monmouth Mall to participate/put solar panels on their roof? **A:** **The property owner has to be made aware or the program and willing to discuss the opportunity with a developer**

77:30 Holly : If I already signed up with Arcadia but am waiting on a community solar farm assignment, can I re-sign up through Solar Landscape to get a larger discount? **A: You can contact arcadia customer services.**

72:36 Andrew: Reacted to "Do you reevaluate "h..." with 👍

**CONTACT** Yvette Viasus yvette@solarlandscape.com, 862-324-2320

75:01 Antwan : Reacted to "Yvette Viasus, yvett..." with 👍

76:12 Sidney : Thank you! Excellent!

**\*\* According to multiple sources, Community Solar subscribers who also have 3rd party electric supplier contracts should not experience problems or conflicts. The JCP&L** [Frequently Asked Questions](https://www.firstenergycorp.com/content/dam/supplierservices/files/community-solar---nj/community-solar-faqs-subscriber.pdf) **Q3 states: “Participation in the program does not impact a customer’s ability to choose an energy supplier” AND Q4 states “JCP&L will apply a dollar credit to the customer (BP + Premise number) provided by the subscriber organization. The credit will appear under the "Charges From JCP&L” section of the bill “. I think this implies the Community Solar credit will NOT apply to Charges from 3rd party suppliers, which appear in their OWN section of the JCP&L bill..**

Steve Miller: ALL ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE NEXT MONTHLY WEBINAR register here: https://bit.ly/3tmyd1g for March 16,7PM

TOPIC: An owner raves about their newly constructed highly energy efficient "Passive House". Attend to learn principles to increase energy efficiency of your own current house.