



SOLAR POWER FOR ALL: BRIDGING THE GAP IN LMI COMMUNITIES

The White Marsh community solar project in Maryland represents a significant step towards achieving energy justice, particularly for low-to-moderate income (LMI) communities. This case study explores how the project leverages state-enacted community solar programs to reduce the energy burden on LMI households, offering affordable, clean energy solutions.

BACKGROUND

Energy justice, addressing the disparity in energy costs for LMI communities, is a growing concern. National data from the U.S. Department of Energy indicates that low-income households spend about 9% of their income on energy, three times more than other households. Community solar programs, like White Marsh, aim to bridge this gap.

Experience has shown that a targeted policy and programmatic focus on serving (LMI) consumers is necessary to successfully expand community solar's reach to these communities at scale.

MARYLAND'S LARGEST LMI COMMUNITY SOLAR PROJECT

- ☑ **Location:** Kingston, Maryland
- ☑ **Jobs created:** Constructed in part by members of Power52 Energy Solutions training program for at-risk adults, returning citizens, and underserved individuals in Baltimore City.
- ☑ **Customers accessed:** Provides clean energy to 331 residential households, carving out 51% to low-to-moderate income subscribers.
- ☑ **Legislation:** Part of the Maryland Community Solar Energy Generating Systems Program (2023), with a 30-54% capacity carve-out for LMI consumers.
- ☑ **Financial Incentives:** Nautilus received grant funding from the Maryland Energy Administration, offering a 25% discount on solar energy bills for LMI subscribers, compared to a 10% savings for other customers.



FACTS



1.8

TOTAL MW



51%

LOW-TO-MODERATE INCOME SUBSCRIBERS



2.8M

ANNUAL KWH PRODUCTION

IMPACT



2,027

CO2 EMISSIONS AVOIDED (METRIC TONS)



451

CARS OFF THE ROAD

STRATEGIES AND SOLUTIONS

- ☑ **Policy Advocacy:** Nautilus Solar Energy's commitment to supporting policy advocacy at all levels helped in navigating legislative landscapes and securing necessary funding while providing 51% carveout for LMI with 25% discount on energy bills.
- ☑ **Community Engagement:** Fostering partnerships with local organizations, such as Power 52, helped to build trust and facilitate the enrollment of LMI consumers.
- ☑ **Sustainable Development:** The project not only focused on providing affordable energy but also emphasized environmental preservation and local job creation with fair wages.

The White Marsh community solar project demonstrates a viable pathway to achieving energy justice. By providing affordable, clean energy to LMI communities, the project addresses the disproportionate energy burden faced by these households. Its success not only highlights the potential of community solar programs in bridging economic and environmental gaps but also sets a precedent for future initiatives aimed at fostering equitable access to renewable energy.

