Why should I enroll in Ameren’s community solar program?

Ameren’s community solar makes participating in clean energy easy and accessible!

Community solar is the perfect solution for customers whose homes aren’t ideal for rooftop solar. For example, homes with roofs that don’t face south or west, or homes with roofs that are shaded by trees, aren’t efficient locations for rooftop arrays. However, community solar provides renewable energy opportunities for these customers, as well as for renters, or for customers who can’t install solar panels for financial, or other, reasons.

Guarantees a fixed cost of energy for the long-term. Ameren’s electric rates are expected to rise by 3% annually, but participants in the community solar program will be insulated from these cost increases by the portion of their energy bill that is tied to the community solar program.

Going green is better for you, your community, and the planet! Renewable energy is the energy of the future. Be a part of something big!

What is meant by a “block” subscription to community solar?

A “block” subscription simply refers to the “package” of solar energy that is sold to you, the consumer. Community solar blocks are sold in portions of 100 kWh. You are subscribed to each block for as long as you are an electric customer of Ameren Missouri, unless you choose to cancel your participation.

How much solar can I subscribe to?

Customers can subscribe for up to half of their monthly energy usage in community solar. The average residential customer in Missouri uses just over 1,000 kWh of electricity each month, and could subscribe for up to 500 kWh, or 5 blocks, of community solar from Ameren Missouri, for the one-time fee of $25/block (plus municipal taxes).

How does 100 kWh get used? Well, it depends on the appliances you have in your home, and how energy efficient they are. For example, a typical refrigerator uses between 160-180 kWh of energy every month. So, if your household subscribes to 2 blocks of community solar (2 blocks * 100 kWh/each = 200 kWh of solar), you could say that the sun powers your refrigerator, keeping your groceries cool!
How much does it cost to participate in Ameren’s new community solar program?

After your one-time fee of $25/block (and additional municipal taxes), you will be charged $13.95 for each 100 kWh block you are subscribed to every month. This charge will replace an equivalent amount of conventional electricity on your bill, and will appear as a separate line item.

For example: If you are enrolled for 3 blocks of community solar and your monthly energy usage is 990 kWh, your bill will be divided into two sections. You will be billed for your three blocks of community solar (3 blocks * 100 kWh * $.1395/kWH = Community Solar Charge of $41.85). The remaining energy usage of 690 kWh (990 kWh - 300 Community Solar kWh) will be billed to you at the most current rate of electricity.

What other fees & costs are associated with subscribing to the community solar program?

To enroll in the community solar program, you must pay a one-time fee of $25 for every 100 kWh community solar package you subscribe to. This one-time fee is subject to municipal taxes.

This one-time fee is only refundable if you choose to withdraw from participation before the project is committed to construction (which will happen once all of the 400 available blocks - sold in chunks of 100 kWh each - are subscribed to). If you choose to withdraw after that, you will not be refunded any amount of the subscription fee. However, there will not be other penalties for withdrawal.

Will the cost to participate in Community Solar increase after I subscribe?

The community solar rate, otherwise known as the Community Solar Tariff, is a fixed, guaranteed cost of $13.95/100 kWh. Thus, the portion of your energy bill derived from the community solar program will be insulated from future energy cost increases.

Remember - Ameren Missouri’s electric rates are expected to increase at a rate of 3% annually. The more community solar you participate in (up to half your monthly usage, calculated based on your previous 12-month average), the more security you will see reflected in your monthly bill.
It's possible! While the community solar charge, or Community Solar Tariff, will stay the same ($13.95/100 kWh), the portion of your bill not subscribed to the solar program will be subject to electrical rate increases that fluctuate with the market, and are projected to rise. Thus, this combined community solar and conventional electrical subscription could be lower than a purely conventional electricity bill.

If you wish to cancel your subscription to community solar, but remain an electric customer of Ameren Missouri, you will be unenrolled from the program. However, the block deposit of $25/100 kWh that you paid at the beginning of your participation in the community solar program will not be refunded, unless you withdraw your participation before the project is committed to construction.

You will be automatically unenrolled from Ameren’s community solar program if you move out of Ameren’s service territory, or otherwise cease to be a customer of Ameren Missouri. The original, one-time fee of $25 will not be refunded to you if you unenroll after the project has been committed to construction.

Yes, if the program is very successful and if additional solar plants were built for the program at a cheaper cost, the Solar Generation charge should decrease.

The industry has seen solar plants that produce electricity that feeds into the grid — has seen the biggest price drop: an 86% decrease since 2009.

The “fixed” portion of your bill is the Solar Generation Charge, which is a guaranteed cost of $13.95/100 kWh. It will not increase because it will be excluded from future energy cost increases. It could decrease given the success of the program and if additional solar plants were built for the program at a cheaper cost.
Am I eligible for the federal tax rebate known as the Investment Tax Credit?

No. Buying blocks from a community solar project and participating in it, does not make you eligible for this tax credit. The Investment Tax credit only covers those installing solar on their own property.

In what scenarios would my program participation fee be refunded?

There are two scenarios in which your program participation fee would be refunded:

1) If you, the subscriber, cancels your enrollment before the plant is committed to construction.

2) If a subscriber’s committed blocks are moved to a community solar plant (Yes, you can move to another community solar plant if it’s within Ameren’s service territory), where the program participation fee is already satisfied due to another customer dropping their blocks after commitment to construction.

What are the surcharges on my bill? Will they be the same every month if I participate?

The only addition to the subscriber’s energy statement will be the addition of the Community Solar line for the Community Solar charges. This line item will be the same each month. All other current charges will remain on the energy statement.

How much can I expect my bill to increase?

For a residential customer, each block will cause your bill to increase by $1.37 per block for the summer month. During the winter, each block will increase your bill by $7.95 if the block replaces customer usage that is greater than 750 kWh and $5.19 if the block replaces customer’s usage that is less than 750 kWh. The average household uses just over 1000 kWh per month.