

# Equitable Access to Solar



Solar United Neighbors (SUN) is a national non-profit solar advocacy organization with experience in designing and deploying low-to-moderate income (LMI) solar adoption programs. SUN is committed to driving an equitable energy system that directs control and benefits back to local communities with rooftop solar at the cornerstone of that vision. LMI solar adoption programs help us identify barriers, increase solar education, provide technical assistance, and build strategies for scaling of programs.



## SUN's Blueprint & Programs for Solar Access

We are increasing equitable access to solar to ensure all communities can benefit socially and economically. The following are the focus areas within SUN's LMI programs.

**IMPACT:** From 2016 to 2023, we implemented 29 LMI programs resulting in 200 signed contracts, \$4.4 million energy savings, and 982 kW installed.

**RESOURCE ALLOCATION:** We leverage philanthropic, state, city, and/or utility incentives to create a pathway to affordable solar.

**PROGRAM PARTNERSHIP:** We design programs through a community-led process. Some of our partners include local governments, trusted community organizations, and local land banks/trusts.

**ACTIVE PROGRAMMING:** We launched programs in AZ, PA, OH, IN, TX, FL, MD, VA, MN, CO, DC, PR

## Energy Burden & Barriers

LMI households are under-represented among solar adopters. Barriers include:

- Upfront costs
- Homeownership status
- Qualifying credit
- Language access

We also know low-income households pay **3 times** more of their monthly income on energy bills compared to non-low-income households.

We believe solar can be part of the solution for alleviating energy burden for vulnerable communities.

# SUN's Success Stories and Impact



## Washington D.C.

In 2017, SUN helped implement The Solar for All program in Washington D.C. to help more than 200 low-to-moderate income D.C. residents living access fully-funded rooftop solar. We continue working with the city and other partners to develop a meaningful low-income solar program for DC.

## Cleveland, Ohio

In 2022, the Cleveland LMI pilot solar project launched which resulted in 7 households receiving solar at no-cost. All 7 households lived in areas experiencing a disproportionate energy burden. The solar installations will provide participants collectively \$95,000 in lifetime bill savings and eliminate 42.4 million pounds of CO2 emissions!



## Looking Forward 2024 and Beyond: Solar for All (SFA)

Under the SFA program, states, tribal nations, and organizations will create or expand solar in low-income and disadvantaged census tracts which will allow specific communities to access and benefit from distributed solar over a 4 year process. As a local and trusted partner across the country, SUN was involved in this planning process and 23 applications. To meet the moment, we developed a best practice LMI program design guide, reviewed drafts, outlined budgets, and consulted partners on installer management, bulk purchasing, equitable program design, and more. SUN was directly named as a recipient or consultant in 5 applications and we anticipate more invitations and demands as states scale up their programs.