SOLUTION AT A GLANCE: TRINITY HOUSING: COMMUNITY SOLAR SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR LOW-INCOME HOUSING

SECTOR
Multifamily

BARRIER
Identifying or evaluating energy-saving technologies

TOOL TYPE
Other

BUILDING TYPE
Multifamily

TECHNOLOGY
Renewable Energy, Solar PV

OVERVIEW

In 2019 Trinity Housing Corporation of Greeley, Colorado, partnered with Oak Leaf Energy Partners to join a 2,000 kW DC community solar garden. Trinity provides 108 units of affordable housing and family assistance support services at Island Grove Village Apartments and to the surrounding community. The organization pays for water, gas, electricity, and free wireless for tenants and was interested in adding solar to their property to reduce their carbon consumption and utility costs. However, their energy-efficient membrane roofs would not permit solar panel installation. They began to explore community solar as an option, and reached out to several different contacts, finally connecting with Oak Leaf Energy Partners.

In 2016, the Colorado Public Utilities Commission approved a settlement with Xcel Energy for one of the most comprehensive low-income solar programs in the country. The settlement included 117 MW of community solar gardens, with 5% of each new shared solar project to be reserved for low-income customers. Oak Leaf qualified for Xcel Energy's Solar Rewards Community Program in Colorado with buy-in from a handful of low-income housing subscribers, including Trinity, and built a ground-mounted solar array totaling 2,000 kW DC in Greeley. Trinity was able to join the community solar garden in 2019 at no cost and receives bill credits for the electricity produced by

their share of the community solar garden.

Currently, five of Island Grove Village Apartment's nine buildings have been able to participate in the community solar program. Trinity Housing Corporation of Greeley saves $10,000 – $11,000 a year from participation. Their buildings' monthly utility bills have been as low as $10 a month and the organization has had a seamless transition to community solar.