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SIERRA CLUB
IDAHO CHAPTER

Boise's Creative Solution for Equitable Community Solar

Lisa Young, Director, Idaho Sierra Club

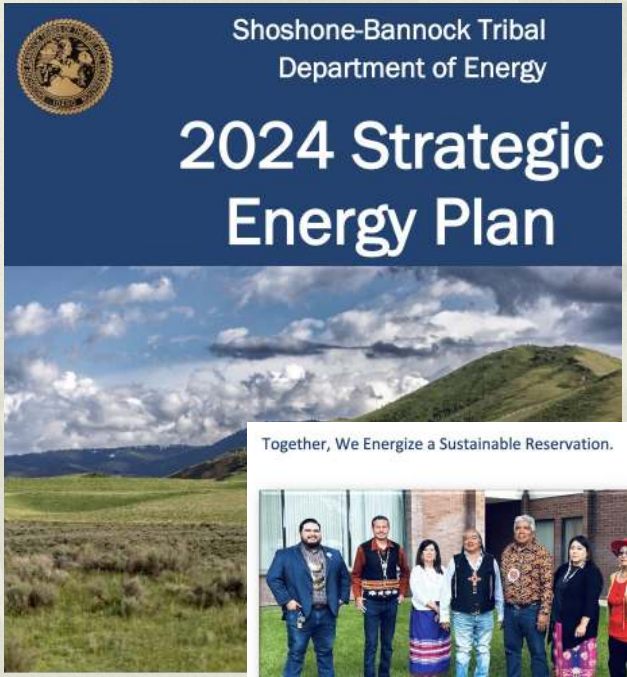
MT2030 Climate Summit | Sun Valley, ID | Oct 14, 2026

Honoring Idaho Tribal Leadership on Solar









Telling Our Story

What is Community Solar?

City of Boise’s Community Solar Goals

Advocacy & Collaboration

Obstacles & Creative Solutions

Vision For the Future



What is Community Solar?

Community solar lets people **share the benefits of one big solar array in their neighborhood**—benefits like reducing pollution and lowering power bills.

It’s great for renters and folks who can’t afford to buy solar panels on their own.



Our Story

2019
City of Boise sets goal for *500 kW community solar by 2025*

2023
Idaho Power gets PUC approval to develop subscription model, but economics don't pencil out

2024
Idaho Sierra Club youth team march on City Hall

2024-2026
Youth & staff meet w/ City to explore & develop options

2025-2026
Idaho Sierra Club holds community meetings, youth paint a mural

July 2026
City Council approves small $50k budget for community solar pilot

2027
Boise's first 26 kW community solar pilot will go live!

(+tax credits expire)

The Beginning

Earth Day 2024

Youth heard about the City's 2019 goal for *500 kW community solar by 2025*, and marched on City Hall to urge swift & equitable action



Many, Many Meetings

2024-2026

We had a mission: equitable, locally-owned community solar ASAP

Checklist for equitable community solar:

- ☑ Democratically owned
- ☑ Democratically controlled
- ☑ Low-income access prioritized
- ☑ Installed by local workers
- ☑ Located in the community







Creative Solutions

...to Idaho obstacles:

- **Only utilities can sell power / own a traditional subscription solar project**



Rooftop solar array on City-owned bldg



Power bill savings go to low-income agency

Creative Solutions

...to Idaho obstacles:

- Only utilities can sell power / own a traditional subscription solar project
- **Limited up-front funding support**



Rooftop solar array on City-owned bldg



Donations from local solar companies



Power bill savings go to low-income agency



Federal tax credits / rebates ('Elective Pay')

Creative Solutions

…to Idaho obstacles:

- Only utilities can sell power / own a traditional subscription solar project
- Limited up-front funding support
- **Limited public awareness**



Rooftop solar array on City-owned bldg



Donations from local solar companies



Hand-painted public mural



Power bill savings go to low-income agency



Federal tax credits / rebates (‘Elective Pay’)



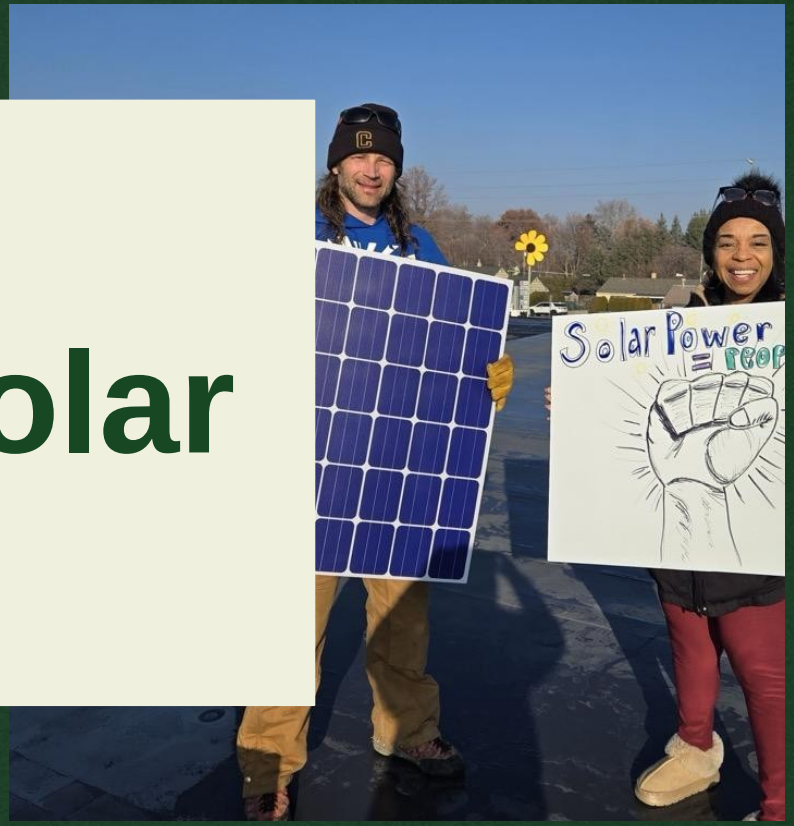
Community education events



We Did It!

This summer, Boise City Council approved $50k for a 26 kW community solar pilot project. It will be installed on a City-owned building next year, and deliver $5k/yr to the local CAP Low-Income Energy Assistance program.

We Need Community Solar - FOR ALL

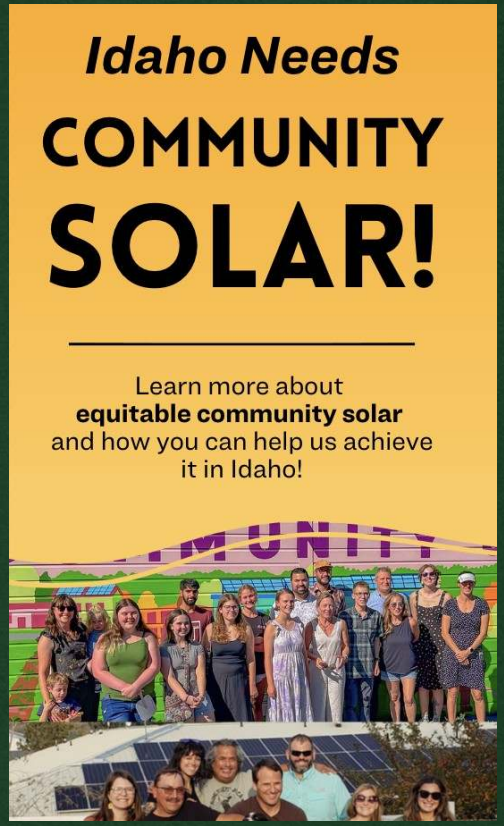


More Resources

sierraclub.org/idaho







Thank you

For further questions, please reach out to:

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