

2012 End-of-Year Report

2012 Accomplishments

Goal #1: Build a strong network of community-based renewable energy champions

Meet some of our new members!



sol solution

Sol Solution is a nonprofit dedicated to helping underprivileged schools generate clean, renewable electricity and increase the quality of education. Sol Solution has adapted the traditional for-profit Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) model to allow schools to go solar and save money without any upfront costs. View their profile [here](#).

RE-volv is a donations-based revolving fund model that is self-perpetuated through solar lease revenue. The organization uses this donation-based revolving fund as a basis for developing solar projects in the nonprofit and community organization sector. View their profile [here](#).




New VISION
renewable energy

New Vision Renewable Energy is a West Virginia-based nonprofit dedicated to re-energizing communities and helping them implement renewable energy solutions in their communities. Led by Pastor Ruston Seaman of People's Chapel Church, the organization has developed a solar "time bank" where members build and install solar panels at a fraction of the cost of traditional systems. View their profile [here](#).

Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) are teams of diverse individuals, small business owners, farmers, utility representatives, members of environmental groups, government staff, elected leaders, and academics that all share a common goal: creating strong communities, local jobs, and secure, clean, reliable energy. View their profile [here](#).



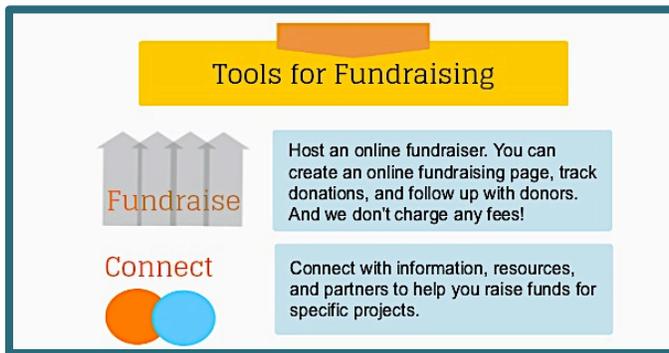
A key role of CPN is one of a network maker. We help put community power on the map by connecting organizations that do similar work on community renewables around the country. In 2012 we doubled the number of CPN member groups from 30 to 59. We connect groups to one another and provide groups with resources, technical assistance, and information on how to more effectively create change in their communities. Because each of these groups is also working to promote renewables in their communities, our impact is multiplied.

Our role as network builders is to not only support our member groups, but also build a broader political movement for community-based renewables. The first step in this process is therefore to build this network of organizations, and to build the advocacy toolbox of the network.

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Goal #2: Strengthen the community-based renewable energy movement

New tools for member organizations include:



In 2012 we developed and disseminated a suite of new tools to help our members better promote community renewables. These tools include online resources guides (such as a guide to solar for schools), online calculators and tools to plan renewable energy projects.

In the past year, we also responded to requests for technical assistance from individuals and groups in Indiana, Louisiana, Georgia, Pennsylvania, New York, California, Maine, Oregon, and Massachusetts. In addition, we met with and provided technical assistance and training to activists and groups in Toronto, Iowa, Minnesota, Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia, and North Carolina.

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Goal #3: Pilot, test and disseminate innovative models for community-based renewable energy projects

Some of our current pilot projects include:

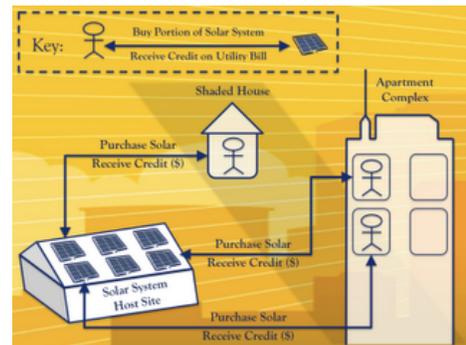


DC SUN Nonprofit and Small Business Solar Bulk Purchase Pilot

By organizing a group of nonprofits and small businesses to buy solar system together, we have demonstrated that the bulk purchase model allows organizations to save money on their utility bills while going solar. Scaled up, this model will open the solar market to organizations that otherwise would not have the money or time to devote to purchasing a solar system. By aggregating projects in a group we also save the organization about 30% on the cost of the system.

DC Community Solar Legislation

We have developed and introduced community solar legislation in Washington, DC, as part of a broader effort to showcase a new model for urban, inner-city solar projects. Community solar will dramatically open up DC's solar market by allowing renters, low-income individuals, and apartment-dwellers the opportunity to directly benefit from a solar system installed in the city. This creates an entirely new base of solar supporters, promotes energy equity, and allows everyone in DC to benefit from solar energy.



In 2012 we continued to use Washington, DC as a testing ground for innovative new models for community renewables. Our approach is to use test projects as a mechanism to organize communities and, in turn, transform the legal, economic, and regulatory landscape. We then share our lessons learned with CPN member groups and others interested in doing similar projects in their communities.

Both community solar legislation and the nonprofit solar bulk purchase program highlight low-income communities in order to broaden and expand support for renewables across the political sector. We believe both models could be very politically important as a way to transform the politics around renewables and climate change in cities such as Baltimore, Richmond, Philadelphia and New York, where low-income communities have seen climate related legislation as a distraction from their more urgent needs such as jobs and education.



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Goal #4: Connect solar supporters and advocates to build a new, broad constituency of renewable energy champions



In 2012 we established statewide solar networks in Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia. These networks are designed to help to reframe solar energy as non-partisan, democratic energy source that everyone deserves to benefit from.

The state networks also allow us to connect existing networks of activists and solar leaders within each state, provide direct technical assistance to groups interested in going solar, and help create a strong base of citizen solar supporters. These state hubs form the basis of a longer-term power building and policy reform strategy, as they allow us to build a base of solar constituents that can be deployed for policy advocacy efforts.



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Goal #5: Develop new partnerships that further the mission of Community Power Network

Key strategic partnerships in 2012 included:



This year we developed a partnership with the American Solar Energy Society (ASES) and are positioned to deploy a national campaign for solar citizens through this partnership. The campaign will focus on solar as an accessible, affordable technology that has tangible benefits to everyday “Solar Citizens.” It will target 50,000 ASES supporters nationwide, as a first step and further promote our message that renewables are more than just an “environmental” issue. The goal of this partnership will be to build a large online advocacy community to educate, engage and mobilize renewable energy enthusiasts. We will focus on listbuilding and partnerships for the first year and we believe this work will be highly complementary to the group-focused Community Power Network. It will also help build the links between on-the-ground projects and state and local advocacy.

In 2012 we also supported community organizers and solar developers in Maryland to establish pilot projects in key locations across the state. Together we’ve fundraised \$110,000 to support MD organizing efforts, including implementing demonstration projects and building grassroots support to pass a number of solar policies. We expect to build MD SUN, into a statewide network of solar supporters that serves to connect solar advocates and stakeholders around the state. The focus will be developing demonstration projects and building public support for solar in the inner city Baltimore, as well as two rural conservative counties. We will also target key legislative districts, in order to develop innovative and inspirational projects in these strategic locations and then use the successful completion of these projects to reframe solar with key constituencies and elected officials. Unfortunately that money is restricted to project development in MD and cannot be used to cover our salaries or basic expenses.

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Plans for 2013

In the coming year we plan to continue to grow Community Power Network and expand our support to new and existing groups.

Goal #1: Build a strong network of community-based renewable energy champions

This year we plan to:

- Continue to grow our network of community renewable energy champions.
- Strengthen our network to allow groups to better connect with one another and share resources and support.
- Helping advocacy groups plan and implement strategic projects as a means to create policy reform.
- Use the solar citizen initiative to strengthen policy advocacy efforts across the movement, since many of our groups are largely project focused at the moment.



Goal #2: Strengthen the community-based renewable energy movement

This year our plan is to:

- Develop and deploy more advocacy tools, based on feedback from our members.
- Continue to develop reports and resource guides on new models and approaches in the sector, such as solar for churches, municipalization efforts, community biofuels, and how to influence your local solar electric cooperative
- Develop information and resource guides on new models for community renewables and share with our members.
- Revamp the website to make more interactive and engaging (if funding is available).



Solar schools guide developed in 2012 in partnership with The Solar Foundation

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Goal #3: Pilot and test innovative models for community-based renewable energy projects

Plans for 2013 include:

- Scaling and adapting our pilot project models for other political environments.
 - This includes helping groups to develop solar bulk purchase projects outside of Washington, DC. We are currently exploring the possibility of projects in West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, and Minnesota.
 - Support implementation of low income community solar in Washington, DC.
- Helping MD, VA, WV groups deploy some specific demonstration projects in strategic areas, as a means to organize citizen support for renewable technologies.



Goal #4: Connect solar supporters and advocates to build a new, broad constituency of renewable energy champions

This year we plan to:

- Deploy statewide solar networks in three more states. Depending on available funding current candidates are Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and Minnesota. We have received inquiries from activists in these states and we are increasingly confident that our model is an effective approach for creating a statewide network that links on the ground projects to aggressive state-level advocacy and policy reform.



Goal #5: Develop new partnerships that further the mission of Community Power Network

In 2013 we plan to:

- Continue exploring other partnership opportunities.
- Develop partnerships with specific solar companies and industry leaders, as a means to reach new and existing solar consumers and advocates.