

Overview

- Who is Solar United Neighbors of Florida?
- What's a solar co-op?
- FAQs about co-ops and more resources
- How do I make a solar co-op happen in my community?



SOLAR UNITED NEIGHBORS

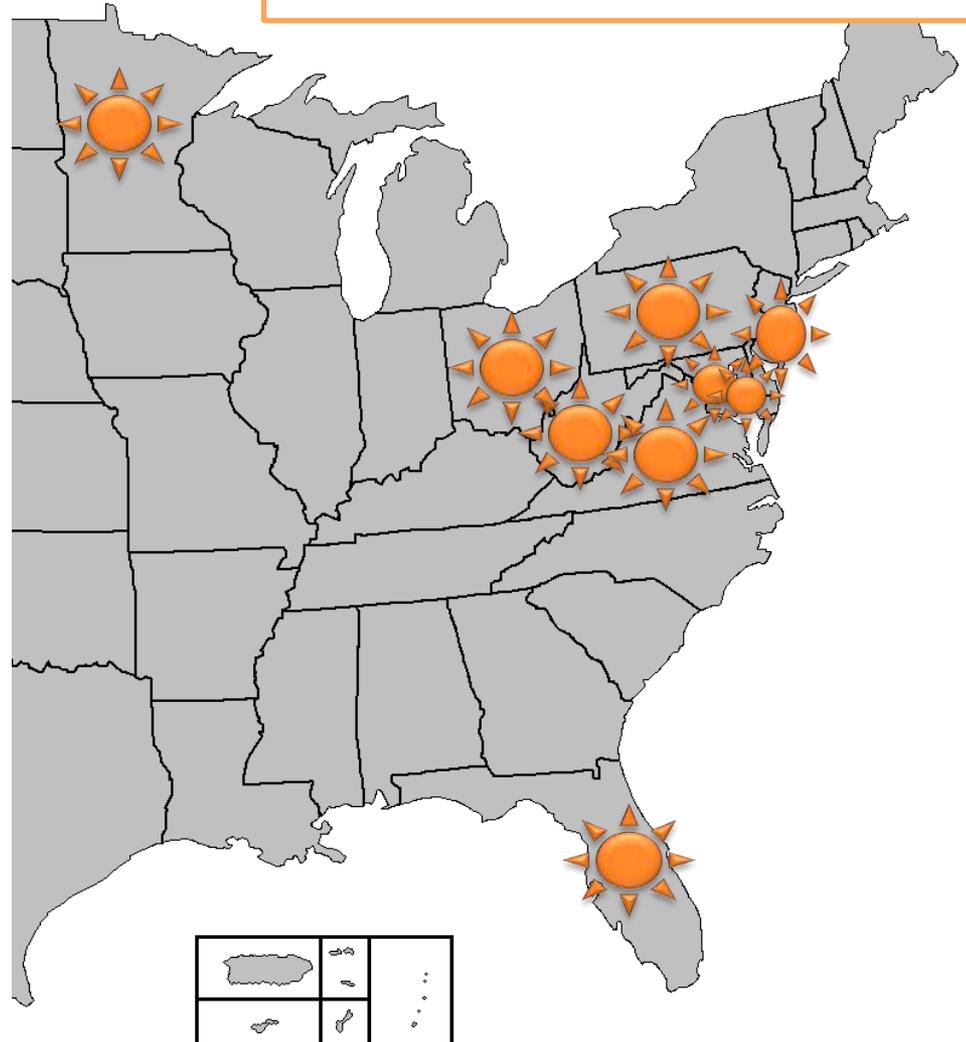
We're a community of people building a new energy system with rooftop solar at the cornerstone.



About Solar United Neighbors

- We're a national organization with on-the-ground programs in nine states
- Solar United Neighbors of Florida is the largest!
- In Florida we're partnered with the League of Women Voters of Florida

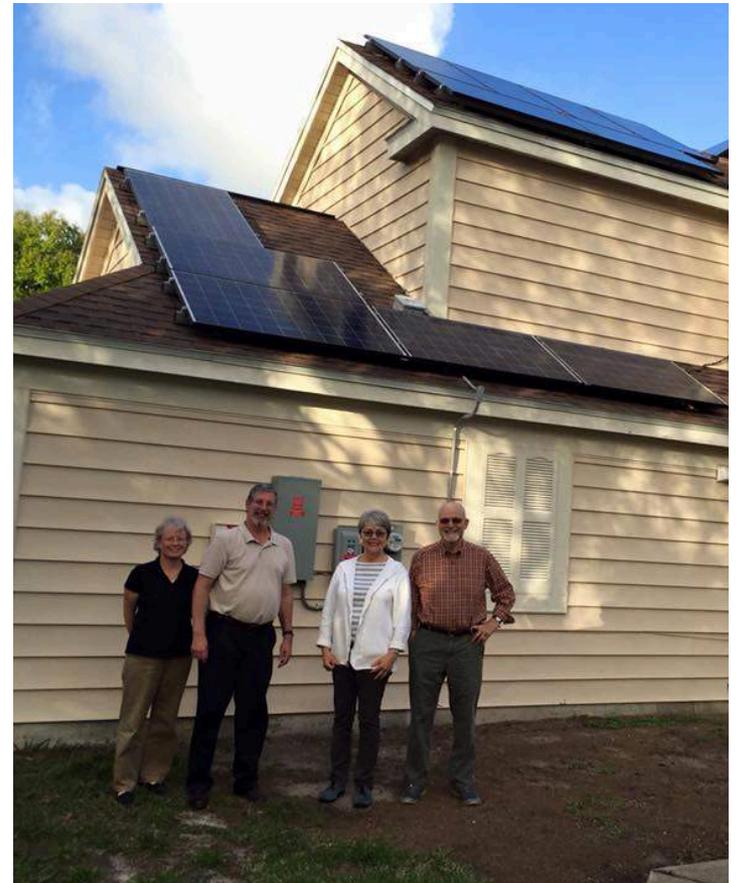
- D.C.
- Florida
- Maryland
- Minnesota
- New Jersey
- Ohio
- Pennsylvania
- Virginia
- West Virginia



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF FLORIDA

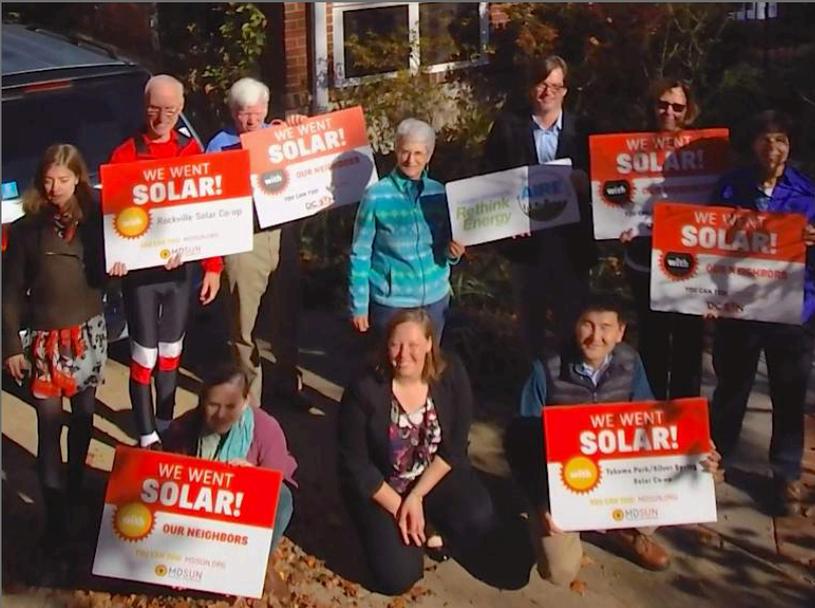
About Solar United Neighbors of Florida

- Got started in 2015 when two volunteers heard about solar co-ops on the radio and wanted to bring them to Florida
- Program launched officially in 2016 with major support from the League of Women Voters of Florida



We help people go solar,
join together, and fight for
their energy rights

Collectively our programs
have a big impact!



35,000
supporters

2,000+
educational
presentations on
solar in
communities

17 MW
installed by our
members

2,300
people gone solar
with us

\$42M
invested in economy

583M
lbs carbon offset

What's a solar co-op?

- Group of neighbors go solar together
- Group selects single solar company to install for group
- Leverage power of bulk purchasing to get a discount on a quality system
- Get support from Solar United Neighbors of Florida throughout the process



Co-op process



Co-ops by the numbers

- **3 months** - How long co-ops are open to new members
- **225** – Max number of members allowed in a co-op
- **30%** - Percent of co-op members that usually end up going solar
- **7 kW** - Average system size of co-op members
- **3** – Number of informational sessions for each co-op
- **1** – Number of installers chosen to service each co-op
- **1,000** – Average number of emails received & replied to by Solar United Neighbors of Florida for each solar co-op
- **18 (and counting)** – Number of co-ops that have happened in the state as of Oct 2017.

How to start a co-op



- We partner with local League chapters, community groups, and other entities to organize co-ops
- Solar United Neighbors of Florida facilitates the co-op, local partners spread the word and recruit participants.

Partnership responsibilities

SOLAR UNITED NEIGHBORS	COMMUNITY PARTNER
Handles all technical and administrative support for co-op	Recruits participants for the co-op
Creates co-op website and administrates sign up process. Responds to technical inquiries.	Work with Solar United Neighbors to develop and implement a media campaign to recruit co-op members
Presents at info sessions	Finds and reserves space for info meeting
Facilitates RFP process and installer management	Serves as the 'public face' of the co-op and talks with local media when applicable
Provides relevant group updates and communications during all stages, conduct final assessment and data collection	Helps direct interest towards future programs or advocacy
EVERYONE CELEBRATES A SUCCESSFUL CO-OP!	

Getting started

Ready to organize a co-op? Great! There are a couple of steps that happen before a co-op can launch.

1. Learn about solar co-ops and how they work
 - Visit www.solarunitedneighbors.org/florida and check out existing co-ops
 - Read through the FAQs to understand the basics of solar and co-ops: www.solarunitedneighbors.org/faqs
 - Watch an information session: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlraSmLvLX0>

Ready to organize a co-op?

2. Build a team

- Identify other volunteers, organizations, and people also interested in organizing a co-op
- Have them learn co-op basics listed above too!

3. Contact Angela, Florida Program Director, and let her know that you've laid the groundwork for a co-op and are ready to be put on the schedule.

- She'll add you to the co-op queue and give you a co-op launch date.
- Two months before the launch of your co-op we can begin to plan the co-op details.

Co-op Steps

4. While you're waiting to begin planning the details of your co-op, build a list of people interested in solar in your community! When the co-op launches we can contact these people and invite them to join the group.
 - Table at events and collect petition signatures
 - Collect solar stories to highlight successful solar projects in your communities
 - Organize a solar open house
 - Host a movie screening of Catching the Sun using our movie toolkit.
 - Ask your local municipality to pass a resolution in support of solar

[We have toolkits available on our website](#)

Co-op Steps

5. Two months before the launch of your co-op, you can begin working w/Solar United Neighbors of Florida to plan your co-op.
 - We have materials to customize for your co-op, so you don't have to reinvent the wheel.
 - Any public materials about the co-op (press releases, etc) must be approved by Solar United Neighbors before they can be released.
 - It's really important that we don't publically announce co-ops before their official launch date, since it creates a lot of confusion.



Example co-op timeline

Event	Guidance	Date (Examples)
Co-op page goes live	<i>2 weeks before public first event of co-op</i>	(March 15 th)
Press conference/ <u>Kick off</u> event (Optional)	-	(April 1 st)
First info session	<i>1-2 weeks after press conference</i>	(April 7 th)
Issue RFP	<i>ASAP after info session</i>	(April 14 th)
Bids due from installers	<i>2 weeks after issue</i>	(April 28 th)
Selection Committee	<i>1 week after bids received</i>	(May 5 th)
Second info session	<i>At least 3 weeks after selection committee</i>	(May 26 th)
Third info session (optional)	<i>Before <u>sign</u> up deadline</i>	(June 25 th)
Sign up deadline	<i>End of month or easy-to-remember date</i>	(June 30 th)
Party	<i>3-4 months after co-op close out date</i>	(Sept 30 th)

Co-op FAQs



Selection committee meeting to pick a solar installer for the Orange County Co-op in 2015

Why is a co-op only open for 3 months? Co-ops do better when they create a burst of excitement. People are highly motivated by deadlines and will be more likely to sign up if there's a clear end date to the group.

Why are co-ops capped at 225 members? Once you get over 225, installers often struggle to provide good customer service to everyone in the group. And, co-op members end up waiting a long time for their installations.

Why do we send out an RFP right away after the co-op is launched? We want the group to be able to select a company as quickly as possible so members can begin meeting with their installer right away.

Co-op FAQs



Co-op members talk with Angela DeMonbreun, Florida Program Director, after an info meeting

Why do we have to wait before launching a co-op?

There is a *ton* of interest in solar co-ops across the state and we're having trouble keeping up with demand. We (unfortunately) only have so much time in the day and so have to stagger out the co-ops to ensure we can devote enough time to each group to ensure it's successful. But we promise that we are working to launch co-ops as fast as possible.

Why only three information sessions per co-op?

We've actually found that, with info sessions, less tends to be more. With fewer events we create a bigger buzz and are more likely to get press coverage of meetings. So we focus on ensuring each info session is as large as possible rather than having dozens for each co-op.

Co-op FAQs

Can't we announce our co-op early? If we publically announce co-ops before the launch date there won't be a website for people to sign up on, and they'll get confused and frustrated.

While you're waiting for a co-op to launch there are lots of engagement activities (like tabling, hosting a movie screening, and circulating a petition) that you can do to build interest in solar without advertising the co-op. Visit

<http://www.solarunitedneighbors.org/florida/get-involved-with-solar-united-neighbors-of-florida/> to download

resources



The Team

General questions about the program or interested in a presentation about co-ops for your community?

Contact:

- Deirdre Macnab – League of Women Voters of Florida
floridaleague@earthlink.net

Ready to get started?

Contact:

- Angela DeMonbreun – Solar United Neighbors of Florida Program Director
- Jody Finver – Miami-Dade Solar Co-op Coordinator
- Heaven Campbell – Florida Program Associate
FLteam@solarunitedneighbors.org



Join us!

www.solarunitedneighbors.org/florida