

Project Name:

## ANZA SOLAR FARM

Groundbreaking community solar project - built  
Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians tribal land

Size:

998.6 kW<sub>DC</sub>

Location:

65200 CA-74, Mountain Center, CA 92561

# of LMI customers:

162

# of Cahuilla Tribe customers:

38

Project Website:

[https://www.anzaelectric.org/sites/default/files/How%20Community%20Solar%20Works\\_Anza\\_08.16.21.pdf](https://www.anzaelectric.org/sites/default/files/How%20Community%20Solar%20Works_Anza_08.16.21.pdf)

## BEST PRACTICES

- State Grants or other state funding



## Overview

Built on reservation land, the Anza Solar Farm is the first community-scale solar array in California targeted to aid low-income households. Operated by [Anza Electric Cooperative, Inc.](#) (AEC), the project was developed jointly by AEC and [GRID Alternatives Inland Empire](#) (GRID IE). The installation serves the Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians as well as income-qualified members of the AEC, located in southwest Riverside County, California. The project was brought online on June 22, 2021, and is California's first low-income community solar installation. The project is sited on tribal lands.

The Anza Solar Farm was funded primarily by a \$2,059,353 grant under the [California Department of Community Services and Development](#), and is part of a state-wide initiative (California Climate Investments) that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The grant did not provide for the cost of interconnecting the array to Anza's distribution grid. AEC funded this additional project expense.





## Innovative Approaches

- Reduced electricity bills for LMI customers.** Using power generated from the Santa Rosa Solar Project, income-qualified members of AEC can receive a 25% discount (approximate) on their electricity bill. The rates are tiered and escalating<sup>1</sup> – the rate increases as more energy is used per month. There are five rate tiers. The lowest tier (usage below 400 kWh) is charged at 9.8 cents/kWh; the highest tier (usage over 2,000 kWh) is charged at 14 cents/kWh. There is a minimum charge of \$24/month (for connectivity) and a \$10/month participation fee (for the operational cost of the solar farm). The program uses a simple, no cost application. Proof of enrollment in an income-qualified program, or proof of income statement is required. Estimated lifetime savings from the project are \$5.4M.
- Job training for tribal members.** AEC and GRID IE created a six – eight week job training development program for five tribal members to help complete solar panel installations for the Santa Rosa Solar project. GRID IE's Workforce team provided job placement services for the trainees.
- Co-op model benefits members.** Profits are passed back to the members – Co-op members receive pro rata benefits based on usage and power generation.
- Resilience against power outages and brown-outs.** In a separate project called SunAnza, AEC provides additional solar power (3.4 MW), battery storage (2-MW/4-MWh battery) and microgrid capabilities. SunAnza was completed in 2020 in collaboration with AEC's power supplier, Arizona Electric Power Cooperative. SunAnza is important to members, since the main power transmission lines are located in fire zones, and prolonged outages have occurred in the past.

## Lessons Learned

- Involving all stakeholders in the initial design set the stage for a successful project. The project stakeholders were the Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians, GRID IE, AEC, and the community. Each stakeholder brought unique experience to the initiative and worked collaboratively to solve problems.
- Cultural sensitivity is a key part of working on tribal lands. A cultural observer was present on site during the construction to monitor how the land was being used and to provide direction in the event cultural artifacts were at risk.
- Public engagement around the program, and sensitivity to stigma around 'low-income' is needed. Thirty-eight tribal households were enrolled automatically in the community solar program, but other AEC members were more challenging to enroll. Members who were already participating in income-based eligibility programs could have been automatically enrolled. However, there was reluctance from AEC to automatically enroll, since the members did not have information on the program.
- Since the Anza Solar Farm is sited on tribal lands, regulatory hurdles were eased.

<sup>1</sup> Anza Electric Cooperative, Inc. Residential Rate Schedule Summary. Accessed June 22, 2022. <https://www.anzaelectric.org/sites/anzaelectric/files/documents/Rate%20Sheet%20-%20Residential%20Effective%206-16.pdf>



This case study is a part of the LIFT Toolkit initiative. To explore more case studies and best practices visit [LIFT.Groundswell.org](https://LIFT.Groundswell.org)  
[research@groundswell.org](mailto:research@groundswell.org)