

## BEST PRACTICES

- Investment Tax Credit - Tax Equity Investment

Project Name:

# IID-CITIZENS LOW-INCOME COMMUNITY SOLAR PROJECT

One of the largest community solar projects in the nation

Size:

23.08 MW<sub>AC</sub>

Location:

E Peterson Road, Calipatria, CA 92233

# of LMI customers:

12,000

Project Website:

<https://www.citizensenergy.com/post/citizens-energy-iid-dedication-s-largest-low-income-community-solar-project>



## Overview

The IID-Citizens Low-Income Community Solar Project is one of the largest low-income community solar projects in the nation. The project is unique among community solar energy projects in its structure and implementation. Commissioned in September of 2019, the ground-mounted solar project is located on 159 acres of land owned by the [Imperial Irrigation District](#) (IID).

IID is the third largest public power provider in California, and manages more than 1,000 MW of energy derived from a diverse portfolio of resources, including solar, geothermal, biomass, small hydro and natural gas. [Citizens Energy Corporation](#) (Citizens) sells the power generated by two-thirds of the total capacity to IID, the local municipal energy provider in California's Imperial Valley, via a 23-year Power Purchasing Agreement (PPA). Citizens is a nonprofit energy company with an extensive portfolio of utility-scale solar projects. Citizens donates one-third of the power generated to IID, at no cost. Citizens is the developer and owner-operator of the installation, and they lease the land from IID. The cost of the energy from the installation – less than \$0.02 kWh for 23 years – is the lowest IID had ever been able to procure for solar energy.

Citizens has an [existing commitment](#) through its stake in [Sunrise Powerlink](#)





– a transmission line running through the Imperial Valley – to invest in programs that serve low-income customers in IID’s service area. The Sunrise PowerLink was developed in partnership with [San Diego Gas & Electric](#) to meet the power needs of over 850,000 homes in California. Citizens’ profits from the Sunrise PowerLink were used to fund the IID-Citizens Low-Income Community Solar Project.

[DEPCOM Power](#) was selected by Citizens to provide engineering, procurement and construction services as well as continued operations and maintenance of the project. DEPCOM has a strong community pledge – they hired 90% local building and construction labor to build the project, generating nearly 300 jobs, of which 20% were U.S. veterans.

IID has a [Residential Energy Assistance Program](#) (REAP) for income qualified customers. All customers in REAP are automatically enrolled in eGreen to receive a discount from the community solar program. eGreen is designed to distribute the savings from the existing arrangement with Citizens by providing an additional discount to customers enrolled in IID’s

REAP. Participants who meet the REAP income-qualifying guidelines receive a 20% to 30% discount on their electric bill, plus the additional eGreen savings. Participants who are 62 or older need to reapply for REAP every two years, while all other participants must reapply annually. The income guidelines are found on [IID’s Payment Assistance website](#).

The sample customer bill on the next page shows the REAP (see Energy Assistance Discount) discount in a box; and the eGreen discount displayed below the REAP discount.

The project cost \$46 million. Citizens used its own capital to develop the project – for permitting, engineering, and contracting activities – and ultimately secured all the necessary project financing – commercial debt, tax equity, and Citizens’ sponsor equity – to bring the project to commercial operation. No state or federal grants were used to finance the project. The only incentive utilized was the federal Investment Tax Credit (ITC), which yielded the tax equity component of the capital structure.

Customer: [Redacted] Invoice Date: 10/04/2022  
 Service Address: [Redacted] Electric Rate: EL\_RES  
 Contract Account: [Redacted] Business Partner: [Redacted] Page: 1 of 1

...Your Meter Reading Results...						
Meter Number	Service Dates	Days	Prior Reading	Current Reading	Multiplier	Usage(KWH)
	08/31/2022 09/29/2022	30	8,379	10292	1	1,913

**CURRENT BILLING**

	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Previous Balance	\$260.38
Payments Received by 10/03/2022, Thank You.	260.38CR
Balance	0.00
Customer Charge	9.60
Usage (1,913 KWH @ \$0.1169/KWH)	223.63
Energy Cost Adjustment Non-Renewable	\$0.0403 /kWh
Energy Cost Adjustment Renewable	\$0.0067 /kWh
Total Energy Cost Adjustment (1,913/kWh)	89.91
State Mandated Charges: Public Benefits Charge (\$323.14 @ \$0.0285)	9.21
California Energy Surcharge (1,913 KWH @ \$0.00030/KWH)	0.57
Energy Assistance Discount Expires 01/31/2024 (\$323.14 @ 30%)	96.94CR
eGreen Program Discount (\$323.14 @ 4.2000%)	13.57CR

Total Current Charges Due by 10/24/2022 **222.41**  
**Account Balance \$222.41**

We appreciate your participation in the EZ Pay Program. The amount due will be automatically deducted from your bank account on 10/24/2022

## Innovative Approaches

- **Reducing barriers to participation.** IID virtually net-meters the power to program participants and Citizens used profits it earned from an investment in the Sunrise PowerLink transmission line to buy renewable energy for income-qualified IID ratepayers, which enables the program to function without any subscription or participation fees, reducing barriers to participation.
- **Supporting the local community.** DEPCOM Power hired local craft labor to build the project, creating hundreds of local jobs, many of which were filled by U.S. veterans.



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)  
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