

Project Name:

NH SOLARSHARES - APPLEKNOCKERS GENERAL STORE

Local, small scale, community-driven solar
provides benefits to LMI

Size:

27.6 kW_{DC}

Location:

230 NH-25, Warren, NH 03279

of LMI customers:

9

Project Website:

<https://nhsolarshares.org/appleknockers-warren-2/>

BEST PRACTICES

- Philanthropic and Corporate Grants
- No-cost Site Lease
- Public Funding/ Crowdsourcing



Overview

NH (New Hampshire) Solar Shares partnered with [Appleknockers General Store](#) and [New Hampshire Electric Cooperative](#) (NHEC) to build a community solar roof-mounted PV array in Warren, New Hampshire. NH Solar Shares designs and installs small-scale community solar projects and is a wholly-owned subsidiary of [Plymouth Area Renewable Energy Initiative](#) (PAREI), a not-for-profit membership organization. NH Solar Shares was created by NHEC and PAREI. The solar array was installed by [Saccoccia Electric LLC](#) with the help of PAREI staff and volunteers who coordinated the project. It was energized in December 2019. The installation is owned by NH Solar Shares, who has a 20-year no-cost lease with Appleknockers for the roof space.

All of the power generated by the installation is allocated to income-qualified subscribers. Potential subscribers are notified of the program through established social service organizations and programs, through which income verification has already taken place. To participate, households must be in the NHEC service territory, must qualify for NH Fuel Assistance, and have an interest in learning about both solar energy and home energy savings. Early on, PAREI formed a local volunteer committee to assist with recruitment and solar education. There is no cost to sign up, and new families rotate through the program every two years. To apply, candidates can walk into the PAREI office or print a PDF





application form from this [NH Solar Shares web page](#). Monthly bill credits are applied to the subscriber's electric bills for the energy generated from the community solar arrays. Subscribers save approximately \$25 to \$29 a month. Subscriber management and engagement is performed by NH Solar Shares.

The total cost of the project was \$65,000, and was funded by personal donations, private foundations, the [NHEC Foundation](#), and business sponsorships. Under the leadership of PAREI Director/Founder Sandra Jones, NH Solar Shares met a fundraising match challenge issued by the NHEC Foundation by raising more than \$10,000 through individual donations. The NHEC Foundation is funded by NHEC members who participate in the "Round Up Program" where participating NHEC members agree to have their monthly electric bill rounded up to the next dollar with the proceeds benefiting the NHEC Foundation. The average contribution is about \$6 a year per person. Over 10 years, these donations have added up to more than \$3 million, which has been awarded to non-profit organizations that are working to improve the quality of life in NHEC service territory.

"Win-win approach for the environment, strengthening our local grid with more renewables, and sharing solar power with our neighbors..."
~ Sandra Jones, PAREI Director

Innovative Approaches

- **Sharing with neighbors.** The community has stepped up to donate money to share solar with neighbors. Participants also work on energy savings at home to further reduce their utility bill and increase the benefit of

their solar energy credit. The Director of PAREI, Sandra Jones, explains that the community sees this as a “Win-win approach for the environment, strengthening our local grid with more renewables, and sharing solar power with our neighbors... [the community] doesn’t look at it as a hand out.”

Lessons Learned

- Finding subscribers is not an easy task. Low-income families often face transportation and health issues that prevent participation in group meetings, so NH Solar Shares found that communication by mail is the best approach. Educational information about energy saving is sent to subscribers a few times a year.
- The local volunteer committee provided a valuable connection to the community, making it easy for people to sign up for subscriptions and receive solar education.
- PAREI learned that even though some residents could not afford to install rooftop solar, they still had a strong interest in taking action to benefit the climate and environment. The NH Solar Shares installation gave residents a means to fulfill this desire.



This case study is a part of the LIFT Toolkit initiative. To explore more case studies and best practices visit LIFT.Groundswell.org research@groundswell.org