

Planning & Development Services

3Degrees works with municipal and investor-owned utilities to design, launch and successfully manage voluntary green power programs, including community solar.



It can be particularly challenging for utilities to design a community solar program that minimizes risk to the utility and maximizes appeal to customers. Important elements to consider include billing system limitations, excess generation planning, RECs and renewable energy claims, program pricing, customer terms and conditions, and waitlist management.

Given the multitude of variables involved in designing a community solar program, 3Degrees believes that a utility must assess more than one scenario for their community solar program in order to weigh the pros and cons, and ultimately feel confident with the program that they move forward. Through our planning and development services, 3Degrees creates custom, utility-specific program models to inform utility planning and decision making around program design, marketing and pricing.

STEP 1 — Determine utility and program goals

3Degrees will lead a conversation with utility staff that covers program goals, existing program design ideas and the status of the regulatory proposal process. Following that, we will discuss and develop scenarios based on specific utility goals, market realities, different program designs, or a combination of these factors.

STEP 2 — Collect data

Next, 3Degrees will request utility specific information, such as: how customers are billed for energy, T&D, and other relevant charges; move-in and move-out rates; customer counts and average usage by segment; existing customer communication channels; and average response rates for other voluntary programs.

STEP 3 — Scenario modeling & pricing

The development of functional community solar scenarios requires an iterative process between utility staff and 3Degrees. 3Degrees will model the pre-determined scenarios based on the information gathered in steps 1-2 above, and present preliminary results for discussion. After 3Degrees delivers an initial set of deliverables, there will be another round of conversation and feedback from the utility before a final set of deliverables is produced. This process is designed to provide outputs that will support rich internal conversation for the utility moving forward.

STEP 4 — Your community solar roadmap

At the conclusion of this process, 3Degrees will package our findings and recommendations into a community solar roadmap unique to your utility. This roadmap will include the following:

- + Estimated range of charge per kWh needed to accomplish goals and recover costs
- + Summary of key assumptions, risk factors, and cost drivers that impact program outcomes
- + Recommendations on program terms and conditions, program expansion, and/or program design that will help control costs, increase participation, reduce risk, or meet unique utility goals
- + Snapshot of program economics including: time to recover fixed and start-up costs, average cost per customer acquired, and required marketing costs
- + Snapshot of program performance including: projected growth by month for the first two years, and projected attrition by month for the first two years
- + Initial marketing roadmap including tactic list and target execution dates