



Solar*Rewards® Community® Minnesota Subscriber FAQs

How can I subscribe to a community solar garden?

A subscriber to the Minnesota Solar*Rewards Community (S*RC) program must be an Xcel Energy electric retail customer in Minnesota. The premise for which a customer intends to receive a bill credit must also be in the county where the solar garden is located, or in an adjacent county. Subscribers can decide which garden they are interested in and then contact the relevant solar garden operator.

Requirements are largely defined in [Minn. Statute §216B.1641](#).

Subscriber Requirements

The following rules apply to all Solar*Rewards Community subscribers:

- A subscriber must be an electric retail customer of Xcel Energy
- Subscriptions must not exceed 120% of your average annual electric energy usage
- Subscriptions must not exceed 40% of a single garden
- Subscribers will be provided a monthly credit on their bill. The credit will be determined on a dollars per kilowatt-hours produced (\$/kWh) basis by Xcel Energy.

Am I eligible to receive a bill credit? What type of credit is available?

Xcel Energy customers who are subscribed to a solar garden are eligible for a solar energy bill credit each full month the garden is in production.

The applicable bill credit rates can be found in our [Section 9 Tariff](#).

The “Standard Bill Credit” is the applicable retail rate in effect at the time of energy generation. The “Enhanced Bill Credit” is the sum of the applicable Standard Bill Credit and the Commission-approved Renewable Energy Credit (REC) pricing. A Solar*Rewards Community garden electing to sell its RECs (via the Enhanced Bill Credit) to the Company for subscribed energy, shall be at the Commission-approved REC price in place on the date the garden’s application is considered by the Company to be complete.

How is the credit amount determined?

Each month, the solar production from a community solar garden is recorded in kilowatt-hours (kWh). The production amount is then allocated, based on each customer’s subscription size. The customer’s bill credit is calculated by multiplying the number of kWh by the bill credit rate (\$/kWh). Detailed information on the calculation of the bill credit can be found in the published tariff on our website.

Bill credits are applied to the final billed amount, after all electric charges, adjustments, riders, taxes and fees are added in. Therefore the credits will have no impact on the taxable amount owed by the subscriber.

When are credits posted?

On the ninth of every month, each subscriber's share of energy production from the community solar garden is posted to his/her account as a bill credit. Because customers are on different billing cycles, the timing for when each subscriber will see their credit depends on the day their meter is read.

If a subscriber's billing cycle (three-day, meter-reading window):

- **Is before the ninth of the month:** the bill will reflect Solar*Rewards Community credits with a one-month lag time/delay. (For example, a September bill will show credits from July.)
- **Is after the ninth of the month:** the bill will reflect Solar*Rewards Community credits for the previous month. (For example, the September bill will show credits from August.)
- **Contains the ninth of the month:** the Solar*Rewards Community bill credit reflected may be from the previous month, or may have a one-month lag. For this small subset of subscribers, bill credits will not be reflected on their bills each and every month; some bills may include two months' worth of bill credits, while some bills may not show any credits.

Xcel Energy is not able change customers' billing cycles. However, if a customer is on a meter-reading cycle that results in a bill generating on or near the ninth of the month, we have the ability to delay the creation of that bill, in order to ensure that the customer will only see one credit applied to each bill cycle. If you would like to discuss this option, please send us an email at srcmn@xcelenergy.com. While the credits are reflected differently based on the timing for each customer's bill, please remember that the Solar*Rewards Community bill credits will be posted regularly to customer accounts on the ninth of each month.

What if my bill credit amount exceeds my energy usage billed for the month?

If a customer has a net credit balance on their electricity bill because of Solar*Rewards Community bill credits, those credits will be carried over to apply to the next month's balance. If a credit balance remains on a subscriber's bill for at least 12 consecutive months, a check will be cut following the bill cycle including the last day in February to pay out the balance. Customers with consistent credit balances every month would then expect those to be trued up once each year, in late March or April.

Please note that credits are applied per Account #- if you are a customer with multiple Xcel Energy accounts, excess credits will not be reassigned to a separate account. You may be eligible to combine multiple existing accounts into one, but please be aware that in the process of doing so you may miss out on bill credit production months. You would not be eligible to receive retroactive credits for those months if missed.

Please work with SRCMN@xcelenergy.com; your Xcel Energy account manager (or the Business Solutions Center), and your solar garden operator if you wish to pursue this process.

When do I receive my bill credits under the Averaged Monthly Payment (AMP) program?

Customers who have elected to participate in the AMP program are billed monthly on a basis which is separate from their current actual usage. The actual energy usage and associated charges of the customer are still tracked and shown on the monthly bill, but the amount due is averaged over a 12 month period based on the previous year's energy usage. Every 12 months the customer will be billed or a credit will be applied to future bills based on the difference between what's been paid and the actual energy used.

Customers may choose to remain on the AMP program while subscribing to solar community garden, though it will affect how they see bill credits and not necessarily recommended to participate in both programs. SRC bill credits will still be posted to customer accounts while on the AMP program, but the credits fall into the same category as the actual usage charge amounts. This means that though they are continually tracked, customers will not necessarily see the effect of their bill credits on the amount they owe until the end of a 12-month cycle.

Please note: During the year, if there is a significant difference in what is owed for actual usage versus what has been paid under the AMP, we may adjust your monthly payments to prevent large charges to the 12th billing month.

How do the bill credits affect my eligibility for Low Income Energy Assistance?

Because Energy Assistance is based off of the final cost owed on your energy bill, bill credits you receive through the Solar*Rewards Community program may lower the potential amount eligible customers receive for Energy Assistance. If you qualify for Energy Assistance please keep this in mind when signing up for the Solar*Rewards Community program.

How does the 120% rule apply to customers?

Subscriptions must not exceed 120% of your average annual electric energy usage. If you choose to subscribe to near or above 100% of your average usage, please be aware of the policies regarding payout of excess credits.

If there are fewer than four months of consumption history, the following home-usage calculators can be used to generate an estimated usage, to be revised once at least four months of usage are available:

Single-Family Housing Square Footage Calculator

Square Feet Range (sq. ft.)	120% Rule Equivalent (kWh)	Allow PV System Size (kW)*
500-1,000	5,311	4.13
1,001-1,500	7,318	5.69
1,501-2,000	10,215	7.94
2,001-2,500	11,018	8.57
2,501-3,000	12,978	10.09
3,001-3,500	15,618	12.14
3,501-4,000	14,830	11.53
4,001-4,500	17,887	13.91

Multi-Family Housing Square Footage Calculator (applicable for apartments or similar residences):

Square Feet Range (sq. ft.)	120% Rule Equivalent (kWh)	Allow PV System Size (kW)*
0-500	2,999	2.33
501-1,000	4,981	3.87
1,001-1,500	7,334	5.70
1,501-2,000	8,363	6.50
2,001-2,500	10,222	7.95
2,501+	11,087	8.62

**Allowable PV System Sizes may vary based on individual site details- kW values provided are assuming production of 1,287kWh/kW over the course of a year, though actual requirements will be based on kWh*

Please submit an energy audit (HERS Rating or similar) or load calculations for properties that are over 4,500 square feet and have no consumption history. Please submit all system sizing paperwork to srcmn@xcelenergy.com.

We use the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's (NREL) PVWatts® calculator to convert a subscriber's allocation in kW to annual output in kWh. That number is then checked against the customer's historic usage or the home usage estimator for compliance with the 120% rule. NREL's PVWatts calculator can be found on their [website](#).

How does the 40% allocation requirement work?

[Minn. Statute §216B.1641](#) defines a subscriber as **"a retail customer of a utility who owns one or more subscriptions of a solar garden facility interconnected with that utility."** A retail customer is an individual person or corporation and is identified by the **legal name of the party** as defined by state law and existing Xcel Energy tariffs.

Further, **affiliates of a legal entity** will be treated as the same person or entity for the purposes of subscription with the exception of government entities. Political subdivisions of a government entity or public agency can be considered separate retail customers of the utility as defined by Minn. Stat. §216B.02, Subd. 2. If a governmental agency composed of sufficient political subdivisions or agencies has a different account, each political subdivision or agency may have a 40% interest in a single garden.

To provide some context as to whether or not you may be at risk for allocating more than the legislated 40% threshold, we've provided the below questions to help identify possible cases. If you answer "yes" to one or more of the below questions and intend to subscribe to 40% or more of any solar garden, we suggest you contact the S*RC team at srcmn@xcelenergy.com.

- Do you have more than one physical location to which subscriptions can be attributed?
- Do you have more than one account?
- Does the premise address on your bill differ from the billing address?
- Are you one of many accounts for the same type of business?
- Do you have political subdivisions and do you have separate financials per subdivision?

For further clarity, we've put together the following questions and answers about this topic:

- **How do I know whether or not I have multiple accounts under one legal entity?**
There are a couple of ways you can determine whether or not you have multiple accounts that would be combined for the purposes of the 40% requirement. First, if your bill is sent to an alternative address (versus your location) and you receive multiple bills, it is likely that you have several accounts associated with one legal entity.
- **What is meant by "affiliates are considered the same entity"?**
State statute provides guidance with the definitions of "person" and "corporation", which are as follows:

"Person" means a natural person, a partnership, or two or more persons having a joint or common interest, and a corporation as hereinbefore defined.
(As noted in Minn. Stat. §216B.02, Subd.3)

“Corporation” means a private corporation, a public corporation, a municipality, an association, a cooperative whether incorporated or not, a joint stock association, a business trust, or any political subdivision or agency. (As noted in Minn. Stat. §216B.02, Subd. 2.)

Therefore, as defined by statute for our S*RC Community Program, a “person” includes corporations associations or partnerships having a “joint or common interest”. Xcel Energy does not have insight into specific customer legal structures, but if your company and another company are affiliated businesses, then together these two businesses can only own up to a 40% interest in one garden.

- ***As a government agency, I have different political subdivisions. Can I have a 40% interest in one garden per political subdivision?***

The likely answer is yes. Government entities have specific statutes that define them differently than regular “corporations”. Some cities have different political subdivisions and have legal entities such as City X Fire Department and City X Libraries. Each subdivision can have a 40% interest. In order to determine if you are a political subdivision or agency, we provide guidance in the [linked document](#).

- ***How can I determine if there is a “joint or common” interest between two legal entities?***
 - If you can accurately state “yes” to all of the following, then there is no “joint or common” interest and each legal entity would be its own subscriber. You can confirm:
 - There is no partnership or joint venture between them?
 - They have not united together for the same purpose?
 - There is no common owner between them?
 - They are not part of the same corporate family – not affiliates, corporate subunits, nor otherwise related companies?
 - They are independent companies?

- ***Do different legal names and Federal Tax ID number constitute a different subscriber?***

Not necessarily. Having a different legal name and/or a different Federal Tax ID does not by itself show that these are not the same subscriber.

- ***As an elementary school, our bills are paid by the district. Who is the “retail customer”?***

Generally speaking, elementary schools and high schools in the same district are considered one legal entity and therefore together could not have more than a 40% interest in one garden.

What should I do if I still have questions?

Most customers should have very little difficulty determining their eligibility. But if you are unsure of your legal structure, we recommend you discuss this option with your legal representative and then contact srcmn@xcelenergy.com to help determine your eligibility for Solar*Rewards Community.