



Electrify Everything: Purchase Renewable Energy

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Purchase Renewable Energy



Nearly everyone in the U.S. can now buy renewable energy for their electricity supply, whether you rent or own a home. This is one of the easiest and most effective things you can do to immediately reduce your climate impact. And the benefit will keep increasing as you electrify your machines and use more electricity, because it will force your energy provider to buy more renewable energy to match your growing demand.

Below are steps you can take to start purchasing renewable power — from simplest to more involved.

SWITCH WITH YOUR EXISTING UTILITY COMPANY

As a first option, check with your utility to see if they have a 100% renewable electricity plan you could switch to. It might be called Solar Choice, or Renewable Choice, or something similar.

DIFFICULTY:	EASY from utility or an existing Community Solar or Wind project
UPFRONT COST:	\$0 (might save money or cost a little more)
IMPACT:	Medium
CONTRACTORS:	None
DO NOW:	Log on to your utility account (or call) and switch to a renewable power plan if it's available. If not, look for a Community Solar or Wind project to join.
RENTER:	Same.

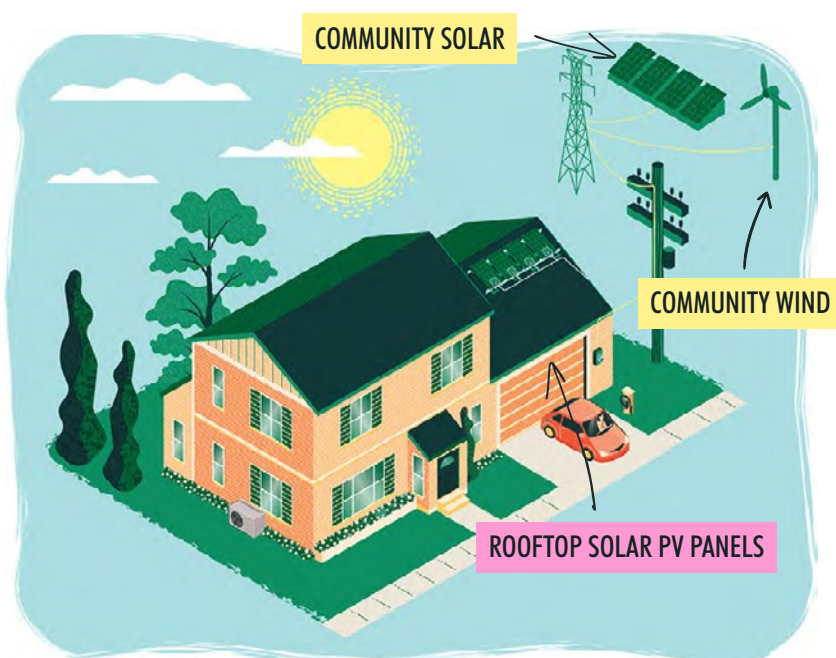
Even if you live in an apartment or mobile home with a single meter for the whole complex, you should ask your homeowners association about switching to a renewable energy plan. This is true of renters as well — ask your landlord about switching!

JOIN A COMMUNITY SOLAR OR COMMUNITY WIND PROJECT

If you can't switch with your utility, you might be able to enroll in a local Community Solar or Community Wind project, where you buy (or subscribe to) solar panels or windmills that feed their power to the grid, and then you get credits to offset your utility bill.

Learn more about Community Solar from Solar United Neighbors — solarunitedneighbors.org/learn-the-issues/community-solar. Then look for a project to join from:

- Energy Sage's marketplace — communitysolar.energysage.com
- NREL's list of "Sharing the Sun" Community Solar projects — nrel.gov/state-local-tribal/community-solar.html
- Search for "[YOUR STATE NAME] + community solar"



Before signing any Community Solar agreement, read SEIA's "Residential Consumer Guide to Community Solar" — seia.org/news/interested-community-solar-new-seiaccsa-guide-you.

We don't know of a Community Wind marketplace, but you can try searching "[YOUR STATE] + community wind" to see if there's a project near you.

OTHER WAYS TO BUY RENEWABLE ENERGY

If renewable energy isn't available from your utility or Community Solar or Wind, you might be able to buy clean energy through other companies, such as:

- Arcadia Power, which buys clean energy to offset your use — arcadia.com
- Inspire, which charges a flat monthly price for unlimited clean energy use — inspirecleanenergy.com

CREATE A COMMUNITY SOLAR OR COMMUNITY WIND PROJECT

It is possible to start a community renewable energy project,¹ though this is a more difficult route than just buying energy from other projects. Your project could revolve around a school, a church, or a block. The Department of Energy has useful resources:

- “A Guide to Community Solar” — nrel.gov/docs/fy11osti/49930.pdf
- “Community Wind Handbooks” for Small and Large communities — windexchange.energy.gov/markets/community
- Your project might be eligible for technical assistance through the Department of Energy’s National Community Solar Partnership — solarinyourcommunity.org

DEMAND YOUR RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE GO RENEWABLE

Rural Electric Cooperatives (REC) are member-owned utilities that have been around since the 1930s. Members might not realize they’re also owners who can demand solar or wind. If you or someone you know is part of a REC, check out:

- “Best Practice Solar Policies for Rural Electric Cooperatives” — solarunitedneighbors.org/learn-the-issues/rural-electric-cooperatives
- The Rural Area Distributed Wind Integration Network Development (RADWIND) site for case studies and other info — cooperative.com/programs-services/bts/radwind

BUY OR LEASE ROOFTOP SOLAR

If you own a home, you can install solar panels on your roof (or yard / field). If you do install rooftop solar but can’t produce enough to cover all your home’s electricity usage, local rules often allow you to sign up for a renewable energy plan or Community Solar or Wind subscription to make up the difference.

Endnotes

1. "Growing Your Own" from Solar United Neighbors, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CzuTKSbMX3Q>