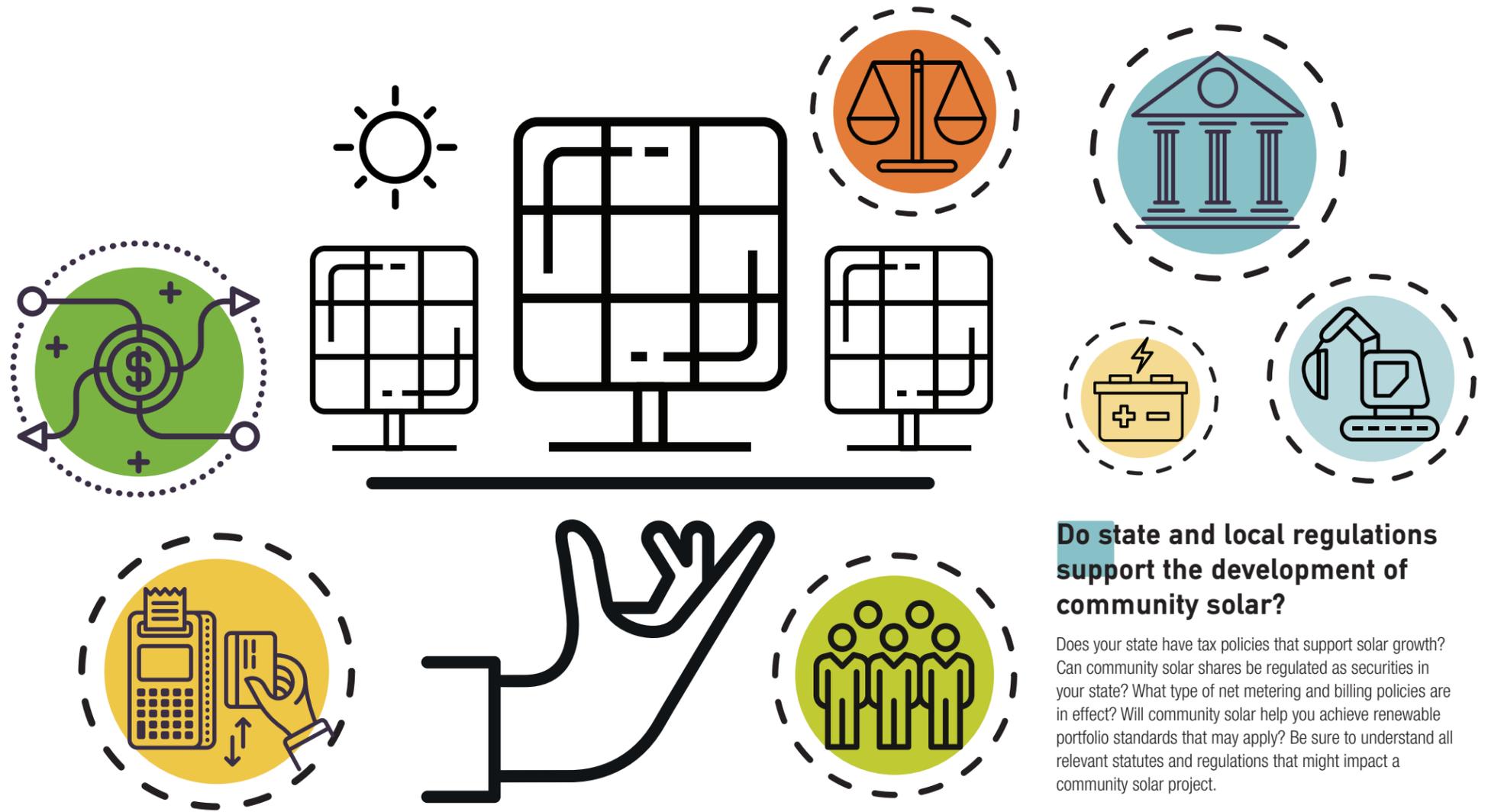


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QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE CHOOSING COMMUNITY SOLAR



Community solar programs are generally cost-effective for customers and utilities. While such programs offer a wide range of benefits, they are not without potential drawbacks. Ask yourself these questions to determine if community solar is the right choice for your utility.

What does your community want?

Have your customers been asking about solar? Are you seeing more rooftop installations in your community? Are you facing political pressure to develop a solar program, whether through utility-scale, community, or distributed energy resources? Will solar help you meet regulatory mandates?

Will your customers pay to play?

A good general sense of your community and its interests is not enough. You must conduct a customer survey before making any plans. Even if you've established the potential benefits of community solar through an extensive cost/benefit analysis, you won't realize the benefits if customers do not subscribe or undersubscribe.

Do you have the staff to run a community solar program?

The launch of a community solar program is just the beginning. You need staff to coordinate, implement, and manage the program, small or large. Think about your resources. Or ask if your joint action agency or state association can help provide some of the manpower to operate the program after launch.

Will the program be fair to ALL customers?

Will a community solar projects create rate disparities among participating vs. non-participating customers? Use a ratepayer impact measure test to quantify program costs, estimate cash flows, and determine how costs will be distributed among customers. You want to be sure your project will not shift costs to non-participants.

Do state and local regulations support the development of community solar?

Does your state have tax policies that support solar growth? Can community solar shares be regulated as securities in your state? What type of net metering and billing policies are in effect? Will community solar help you achieve renewable portfolio standards that may apply? Be sure to understand all relevant statutes and regulations that might impact a community solar project.

How does solar fit into your portfolio?

Even if you don't have to meet state-mandated RPS goals, does your local community want to see more renewables in your generation portfolio? Have you evaluated the cost, rate, operational and reliability advantages and disadvantages of solar projects? Is your load and the nature of demand suitable for solar?

Will you need to develop new infrastructure?

Where will you site your community solar? Do you need to develop and/or expand transmission and distribution lines for off-site community solar systems? Do you need to lease land or buy space to locate panels? Or can you locate the project on utility or city-owned property? Consider the cost and time impact of all these issues.



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