



Job Posting

November 15, 2021

SolarShare Wisconsin Cooperative - Director

SolarShare Wisconsin Cooperative (SolarShare) is a newly formed solar energy cooperative developed by RENEW Wisconsin to advance the solar industry in Wisconsin by working with solar installers and developers in the state to develop, construct, own and/or operate new community-scale solar energy projects that can be owned by everyday Wisconsin folks. SolarShare is looking to hire an energetic and passionate Director to be its first full-time staff member to launch the Cooperative, initiate and coordinate a membership drive for individuals and solar businesses and educate the public about the potential of community-owned solar.

The Director will be responsible for the successful launch and operation of the cooperative within the policies and direction set by the board of directors. The Director will be responsible for overseeing contractors and staff and the successful implementation of solar energy projects aligning with the best interests of the membership. The Director will be responsible for financial reporting to the board of directors.

Objectives:

- The Director will represent the cooperative to carry out its business in a way that supports the operation and success of the cooperative and the solar industry as a whole in the state.
- The Director will efficiently allocate the cooperatives human, financial and material resources to successfully meet the cooperatives mission.

Authority:

- The Director will carry on the business of the cooperative under the direction set by the board of directors and will act on the board's behalf in all matters related to the cooperative's operations.
- The Director will be the highest authority among staff, contractors and consultants within the cooperative.

Responsibilities:

- The Director will be accountable to the board of directors to achieve the goals of the cooperative, through the following duties and responsibilities:
 - Attracting members to the cooperative
 - Development of the cooperative's services

- Maintenance of financial, human resource and other records
- Community and public relations
- Communications among members
- Budgeting and financial reporting
- Compliance with relevant legislation and regulations
- Strategy development and policy recommendations
- Support for board of directors

Relevant Qualifications:

- Strong, demonstrated interest in renewable energy
- Demonstrated experience in stakeholder engagement, financial management, strategic planning, public relations, communications, networking and/or relationship building
- Understanding of cooperative businesses

Salary:

- \$75,000 - \$90,000 depending on education and experience

Application Process:

- Submit resume and cover letter to hr@renewwisconsin.org with the subject line “SolarShare Wisconsin Cooperative – Director”
- Applications will be reviewed upon receipt and accepted until the position is filled
- RENEW Wisconsin seeks to hire the SolarShare Director no later than December 31, 2021

RENEW Wisconsin leads and accelerates the transformation to Wisconsin's renewable energy future through advocacy, education, and collaboration. RENEW Wisconsin is an equal opportunity employer, committed to diversity and inclusion. Women, people of color and other underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply.

SolarShare Wisconsin Cooperative Overview

SolarShare (SolarShare) Wisconsin Cooperative is a newly established state-wide solar cooperative (anticipated incorporation date: November 2021). SolarShare will advance clean energy in rural areas and facilitate local investment rooted in Wisconsin by catalyzing the development of local community-scale solar projects up to 5 MW in size. The cooperative will focus on rural areas with land available for small solar farms. SolarShare will create a new renewable energy ‘crop’ for Wisconsin’s agricultural economy.

Why:

There is strong demand across Wisconsin for local, cost-effective, reliable and renewable electricity generation. Renewable energy project development, construction and operations stimulates rural economic revitalization with rurally-based, well-paying jobs and significant capital investments. As more of the benefits from solar projects are retained in Wisconsin communities, support for development of new solar projects will increase dramatically, helping the industry to expand into new parts of the state.

A cooperative ownership structure for some or all of the equity of renewable energy projects leverages private sector money to finance projects.

Community-scale solar projects can result in both affordable and flexible renewable energy sized to meet local needs and scaled to the local distribution network. What’s more, they use existing infrastructure - nearly every town throughout the state has a substation and adequate infrastructure to support a community-scale solar project of 1-5MW in size.

A cooperative ownership structure allows its members, everyday people, to invest in projects that would otherwise be limited to “accredited investors”, a category that excludes 99%+ of individuals.

Cooperative ownership allows solar benefits to be accessible to a much wider audience, including, with the right utility partnerships, those in multifamily and low-income households, as well as those with shaded rooftops or structures that are not compatible with solar panels.

How:

The solar cooperative will leverage private investment by allowing individuals and organizations to purchase preferred stock, as cooperative members, in solar projects. The cooperative will eventually be spun out of RENEW as it expands to own multiple projects throughout the state.

Who:

- A cooperative formed initially within RENEW Wisconsin with a goal of spinning off into its own self-sustaining entity.
- Members benefit with access to preferred stock purchases and/or direct credits on their utility bills.
- Initially made up of individual investors, non-profits and municipalities based in the communities where the projects are located, as well as, other members across Wisconsin.
- SolarShare will partner with member developers, contractors and utilities to implement projects within existing regulatory framework.

The History of SolarShare Wisconsin Cooperative

RENEW Wisconsin developed a concept for a new cooperative model in 2020. In June of 2021, RENEW Wisconsin received a grant from the [Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation \(WEDC\)'s Targeted Industry Projects \(TIP\) Program](#) to develop the legal structure and administrative framework to serve as a central clearing house for members and developers who are interested in building community solar projects involving local investors in the equity ownership of the projects.

Similar successful programs exist elsewhere in the country, including Minnesota ([Cooperative Energy Futures - CEF](#)), and New York and Massachusetts ([Coop Power](#)), as well as others in the early stages of formation. We will learn from the experiences of CEF by including one of their founders on our advisory board, and will incorporate best practices from both CEF and Coop Power as we create our cooperative.

RENEW has consulted with experts in cooperative law, renewable energy development and utility regulations, and has created an advisory council for both the formation of the cooperative and initial pilot project development. With their expertise and RENEW Wisconsin's network of industry leaders, we are confident we can assemble the right team to build a cooperatively owned community solar model that will have a positive impact on rural economies. The expert advisory panel finalized the bylaws and articles of incorporation for SolarShare in November of 2021.

With the cooperative ownership model, cooperative members will have the opportunity to invest in preferred stock in solar projects located in their community, keeping more of the financial benefits within the local economy and broadening support for renewable energy in rural areas. The jobs and economic activity created by the new projects will be a significant boost to the rural economies where the projects are located.

Areas of Work

Phase 1: Development of Legal Structure (Complete)

Purpose: The Advisory Team will develop bylaws and legal structure, and start industry and member engagement. The Advisory Team will establish the legal and financial structure of SolarShare. The goal of this phase of work is to finalize all documentation required to form the cooperative and issue stock certificates to members.

Activities: The Advisory Team, supported by RENEW Wisconsin will complete the following during cooperative development: legal structure, bylaws, articles of incorporation, first board elections, membership benefits, stock certificate creation. The Advisory Team will oversee the hiring and management of consultants to develop financial and legal structures. The Advisory Team will hold bi-monthly meetings to execute this work. The Advisory Team will also initiate the hiring process for the Cooperative Director.

Phase 2: Cooperative Development and Management (beginning November 2021)

Purpose: SolarShare, will begin establishing communications and staffing to develop and manage the cooperative.

Activities: The SolarShare Director will be hired and brought on board during the beginning of this phase.

Once the SolarShare Director begins work they will initiate day-to-day management including bookkeeping and audit preparation, website, marketing, and securing and managing operational resources (computers, printers, rent, website, office supplies, HR services). The Director will report to the SolarShare Board of Directors, in accordance with the bylaws. Website and payment portal will be launched during this phase of work and there will be a public event or press conference organized by the SolarShare Director to celebrate the launch.

Phase 3: Membership Development (beginning January 2022)

Purpose: SolarShare cooperative members will have the opportunity to invest in preferred stock in solar projects located in their community, keeping more of the financial benefits within the local economy and broadening support for renewable energy in rural areas. The purpose of this phase of the project is to facilitate membership development and raise funds through membership fees.

Activities: The SolarShare Director will oversee the recruitment of new members, will manage the website, marketing and outreach. The website will provide the public with information and a simple portal to become members. Outreach, marketing and recruitment activities may include in person events, earned media, paid advertisements, social media, and more. The membership recruitment drive goals are ambitious; 1,500 subsidized members and 100 unsubsidized members by July 2022.

Phase 4: Ongoing Operations

Upon completion of the first three phases of work SolarShare will be its own entity conducting the work of facilitating WI investment in solar farms and working to ensure the benefits of renewable energy development reach local communities. The vision of SolarShare is to operate for decades under the leadership of the SolarShare Director and board of directors, growing the membership base, and developing solar projects with local support.