



INDIVIDUALIZED PORTFOLIOS – RFPs AND BIDS

Our members feel strongly about choice and optionality. They don't want to be locked into inflexible long-term contracts where they are required to take power whether they need it or not.

As a project-oriented agency, CMPAS provides information and power supply options, and public power utilities choose what works best for them.

To help members meet and exceed environmental expectations, we developed a community solar subscription program for their customers. We analyzed the costs and benefits of building our own project or participating in a community solar project with our public power neighbor, the Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMMPA). Five CMPAS members decided to offer their customers an opportunity to participate in our launch of R4 Solar, for aggregate electric demand of about 235 (kW).

The R4 Solar project demonstrates the difference between a project-oriented joint action agency (JAA), like CMPAS, and other JAAs, which obligate all members to a proportional share of all projects that are undertaken.

We don't approach members with a pre-baked plan and try to convince them to participate. Rather, we start by talking to members to make sure we understand their needs, wants, and expectations. What we hear drives the action plans we create.

Community-based solar projects like R4 Solar play an important role in meeting member and customer expectations. Some customers want to purchase clean, renewable solar power, but for one reason or another can't. Perhaps the cost of a rooftop-solar array was too high. Maybe there were restrictions on what could be attached to a home's roof. Or their roofs might not face the right direction for optimal solar generation.

A community solar project removes all of those impediments and provides our members' customers access to alternative sources of electricity.

"R4 Solar is a good alternative to rooftop solar, which is very expensive and not practical for some customers," said Nancy Zaworski, the Finance Director at the City of Kasson. "Whether you participate in R4 Solar or not, we all benefit from electricity that is emission-free."

CMPAS' power portfolio was about 48 percent carbon-free and provide an important hedge against market volatility, particularly for natural gas, as well as insulates our members from potential carbon risks.