Prioritization Scoring Rubric – 2026 Program Year

For all applications submitted in a calendar month, the Minnesota Department of Commerce will conduct a batch review of the submitted project applications for completeness. The completeness review will include verification that all components identified in Minnesota Statutes § 216B.1641, subdivision 5 are complete and verification that a proposed project meets all eligibility requirements as described in Minnesota Statutes §§ 216B.1641, subdivisions 6, 7c, and 10b. If the total capacity of complete applications from the batch does not take the LMI-Accessible CSG Program over its annual allocation of 100 megawatts (MW), these projects will be approved to move forward as community solar gardens.

If, at the end of the completeness review for a given batch, the total capacity of complete applications for the program year exceeds 100 MW, Commerce will then move to a second phase of review for all complete applications in that batch. This phase will be a more detailed evaluation of projects per the criteria described in subdivision 7b. This "Prioritization Scoring Rubric" will be used to score each application. Applications with the highest scores will be approved to move forward as community solar gardens, with approvals moving in descending order of point totals until the annual capacity has been fully allocated.

Projects not initially approved will be held in the queue for the duration of the program year. If an approved project is not able to move forward, the next in line will then be approved to move forward. At the start of a new program year, all projects, including those held in the queue but not advanced during the previous program year, will be required to apply anew.

1. Pass-Through of Incentives — Points: 5

7(b)(1): "The degree to which subscribers, utility ratepayers, or the community surrounding the project receive the financial benefit of tax benefits and other incentives resulting from the community solar garden."

a. Financial Benefits to Subscribers, Ratepayers, and Community — Points: 2

Applicants must explain how they plan to deliver the financial benefit of tax benefits and other incentives resulting from the community solar garden to subscribers, utility ratepayers, and/or the community surrounding the project.

Applicants that provide commitments to pass these benefits along will be awarded 2 points.

b. Quantifying Financial Benefits of Tax Credits to Subscribers — Points: 2

Applicant details how federal tax credits over 30% will be allocated back to subscribers by a) reporting the specific share of bonus incentives that will be used to lower subscription costs and b) detailing how it will lower those costs. Projects that allocate at least half of the bonus credits back to subscribers through lower subscription rates, cash distributions, or other mechanisms (please explain and quantify) will be awarded 2 additional points.

c. Quantifying Financial Benefits to Ratepayers and Community — Points: 1

Applicant details how federal tax credits over 30% or other incentives with specific monetary amounts will be allocated back to other ratepayers and/or the surrounding community.

That is, if a project should provide support to a community-based project as part of their project activities and detail a value of that benefit, they will be awarded 1 additional point.

2. Financial Benefits to Target Subscribers — Points: 85

7(b)(2): "The scale of financial benefits the community solar garden delivers to LMI subscribers, affordable housing residents, and public interest subscribers, as well as the number of, and project capacity attributable to, LMI subscribers, affordable housing residents, and public interest subscribers."

a. Financial Benefits to LMI Subscribers - Base — Points: 32

All projects must submit a subscription plan that demonstrates subscription savings of at least 10% for LMI subscribers. Applicants will be awarded 2 points for every additional 2.5% subscription savings (rounded down) for LMI subscribers (as demonstrated in the submitted subscription plan), up to a maximum of 32 points.

b. Financial Benefits to LMI Subscribers - Bonus — Points: 32

(Eligible only if awarded points in 2a)

If the project allocates at least 50% capacity to LMI subscribers, then the applicant is awarded points equal to half its score for 2a.
OR
If the project allocates at least 75% capacity to LMI subscribers, then the applicant is awarded points equal to its score for 2a.

c. Financial Benefits to Affordable Housing Subscribers - Base — Points: 11

Applicants will be awarded 2 points for a plan that demonstrates at least 10% subscription savings for affordable housing residents, provided that the project allocates at least 5% of system capacity to affordable housing subscribers. Applicants will be awarded 1 additional point for every additional 10% subscription savings (rounded down) for affordable housing subscribers.

d. Financial Benefits to Affordable Housing Subscribers - Bonus — Points: 11

(Eligible only if awarded points in 2c)

If the project allocates at least 25% capacity to affordable housing subscribers, then the applicant is awarded points equal to half its score for 2c.
OR
If the project allocates at least 50% capacity to affordable housing subscribers, then the applicant is awarded points equal to its score for 2c.

e. Financial Benefits to Public Interest Subscribers – Base — Points: 6.5

Applicants will be awarded 2 points for a plan that demonstrates at least 10% subscription savings for public interest subscribers, provided that the project allocates at least 5% of system capacity to public interest subscribers. Applicants will be awarded 0.5 points for every additional 10% subscription savings (rounded down) for public interest subscribers.

f. Financial Benefits to Public Interest Subscribers – Bonus — Points: 6.5

(Eligible only if awarded points in 2e)

If the project allocates at least 25% capacity to public interest subscribers, then the applicant is awarded points equal to half its score for 2e.
OR
If the project allocates at least 50% capacity to public interest subscribers, then the applicant is awarded points equal to its score for 2e.

g. Project Capacity Attributable to Target Subscribers **Points: 4.5**

All projects must submit a subscription plan that allocates at least 55% of system capacity to LMI subscribers, affordable housing residents, and public interest subscribers. Applicants will be awarded 0.5 points for every 5% of additional capacity over 55% that the subscription plan allocates for target subscribers. (For example, a project that plans an 80% system allocation for target subscribers will receive 2.5 points.) Percentages will be rounded to the nearest full number (For example, a project that plans a 99.6% system allocation for target subscribers will be rounded to 100% and receive the full 4.5 points.)

3. Ownership and Financing Arrangements — Points: 6

7(b)(3): "Community solar garden project ownership and financing arrangements that deliver benefits to public, nonprofit, cooperative, and Tribal entities"

a. Direct Ownership **Points: 3**

The project includes a commitment to ownership of the proposed facility by public, nonprofit, cooperative, and/or Tribal entities. The percentage ownership by all entities must be provided, with at least 50% ownership by public, nonprofit, cooperative, and/or Tribal groups required to earn the points in this section. The eligible ownership structure must remain in place through mechanical completion.

If a project is not primarily owned by public, nonprofit, cooperative, and/or Tribal entities at the outset but includes contractual plans to transfer primary ownership to one or more of these entities at a later date, then the applicant is awarded 1.5 points.

b. Financing Benefits **Points: 3**

The project includes a commitment to finance the proposed facility through public, nonprofit, cooperative, and/or Tribal entities. The percentage of financing provided by all entities must be provided, with at least 50% of the financing coming via public, nonprofit, cooperative, and/or Tribal entities in order to earn the points in this section. The eligible financing structure must remain in place through mechanical completion.

4. Site Location — Points: 4

7(b)(4): "Whether the community solar garden uses nongreenfield locations, especially rooftops, carports, or sites that contain a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant."

a. Nongreenfield Site **Points: 3**

The definition of a greenfield site is that it is undeveloped land that can be used for residential or commercial development. Projects to be built on a nongreenfield per the following list will be awarded 3 points. Please check all that apply:

- ○ Rooftop
- ○ carport
- ○ on an impervious parking surface
- ○ structure
- ○ ramp
- ○ on a closed landfill
- ○ on a former gravel pit or other demolition debris site;
- ○ on a site that contains a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant
- ○ or on some other undevelopable parcel of land (must define).

b. Specific nongreenfield sites named in statute **Points: 1**

Projects to be built on a rooftop, carport or a site that contains a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant will be awarded an additional point.

5. Workforce Development — Points: 6

7(b)(5): "Whether the community solar garden provides workforce development and apprenticeship opportunities, especially for workers who are Black, Indigenous, or Persons of Color."

a. Workforce training, educational opportunities — Points: 3

The project includes a commitment to offer workforce training or apprenticeship opportunities. The exact nature of this commitment, including a description of the programs, a description of the eligible participants and target audience, and the amount of funding that will be devoted to the programs must be provided.

b. Workforce development opportunities for BIPOC communities — Points: 3

The project includes a commitment to offer workforce training or apprenticeship opportunities focused on workers who are Black, Indigenous, or Persons of Color. The exact nature of this commitment, including a description of the programs, a description of the eligible participants and target audience, and the amount of funding that will be devoted to the programs must be provided.

6. Resiliency Benefits — Points: 3

7(b)(6): "The resiliency benefits the community solar garden provides to the electrical grid or the local community."

a. Resiliency Benefits — Points: 3

The project includes a commitment to provide resiliency benefits to the local community through measures taken at or around the site of the community solar garden. Measures include but are not limited to agrivoltaics, pollinator habitats, canopy designs that shelter people and vehicles, and design features that improve stormwater retention and water quality. The exact nature of this commitment, including a description of the specific efforts that will be made to improve resilience and the amount of funding that will be devoted to these efforts must be provided.