



A SUNNY OUTLOOK

New Community Solar project provides easy access to renewable energy

UTILIZING RENEWABLE ENERGY CAN BRING SEVERAL BUSINESS-RELATED ADVANTAGES, INCLUDING COST SAVINGS AND REDUCED EXPOSURE TO RISING ENERGY PRICES.

RENEWABLE ENERGY SOLUTIONS ARE HELPING to meet the hospitality industry’s growing ambitions for more sustainable stays, including IHG® Hotels & Resorts’ own goal of reducing emissions across its owned, managed and franchised hotels by 46%—part of the company’s 10-year Journey to Tomorrow responsible business plan. Since energy from sun and wind sources does not emit greenhouse gasses and is infinitely renewable, it is far more beneficial for the environment and local communities. In addition, utilizing renewable energy can bring several business-related advantages, including cost savings, reduced exposure to rising energy prices and proposals that attract sustainability-minded guests and corporate clients.

To help owners capitalize on renewable energy, the IHG Community Solar offering has been made available to IHG hotels in several U.S. states that have regulatory environments that support solar power development. Currently, most hotels in Illinois, Maine and Maryland are eligible for the Community Solar offering, while

IHG is closely tracking opportunities to expand into additional states.

This innovative new offering was developed by IHG’s Corporate Responsibility, Procurement and Operations teams in collaboration with Ampion, a leading clean energy broker (see sidebar). “IHG’s Community Solar offering is a win-win for hotel owners due to its cost savings, zero capital expenditure and environmental benefits,” says Catherine Dolton, SVP, Corporate Responsibility & Chief Sustainability Officer at IHG. “This initiative is just one example of how IHG is driving progress toward its sustainability commitments while delivering returns for our owners.”

Under the program, solar panel projects are built in or near a hotel’s community and feed electricity into the local power grid. Retaining their current electricity provider, hotels then subscribe to a portion of the solar farm to get credits on their regular utility bill for the clean energy produced, calculated as a fixed percentage off the hotel’s energy bill for the term of the contract.

“Through this initiative, we expect to see financial savings, positive impact from REC credits and a reduction in our hotel’s carbon footprint, all while attracting a guest base that values green initiatives like these.”

—**Brent Jackson**, President, Jackson Hotel Management, Association Loyalty Committee member and former Chair, ELN



This percentage varies between states and individual community solar projects. Hotels will receive two bills after signing up: their standard electricity bill, which will now reflect zero or minimal charges for energy and delivery charges, and a bill from Ampion reflecting the energy charges minus the discount agreed to in the Community Solar contract.

A major selling point of the offering to owners is that participating hotels receive renewable energy certificates (RECs), which are not included in most community solar offerings on the market. For every megawatt hour (MWh) of renewable electricity generated and delivered to the grid, one REC is created. Once hoteliers receive their first RECs, they can include credible renewable energy claims in their marketing materials and on RFPs, making them far more attractive to businesses and guests who have increasingly favored proposals that focus on sustainable initiatives.

“We see this program as an opportunity to harness the power of the sun to not only enhance our guests’ stay experiences, but also to provide renewable energy to our property,” explains Brent Jackson, President of Jackson Hotel Management and former ELN Chair. “Through this initiative, we expect to see financial savings, positive impact from REC credits and a reduction in our hotel’s carbon footprint, all while attracting a guest base that values green initiatives like these. This program perfectly aligns with our vision of creating a greener and more sustainable future for our hotel and the community we proudly serve.”

Owners should bear in mind that demand for renewable energy is very high, and capacity is limited. The Community Solar offer ends once a project is fully subscribed to, so it is best to subscribe sooner rather than later. To sign up for Community Solar, visit the Renewable Energy page on IHG Marketplace at bit.ly/3PtPu4u and click the “Enter” button on the page. Fill out the form for each hotel in your portfolio and upload a recent electricity bill for the developer to analyze your power needs. Once the form is received, an IHG colleague will follow up with more information and to provide the next steps.

POWERFUL SOLAR PARTNERS

TO BRING IHG® HOTELS the most advantageous solar power offering, IHG opted for a broker model, which allows owners to interface with one supplier who is responsible for managing all solar developers and utility partners. IHG created its Community Solar offering in partnership with nationwide broker Ampion for several reasons:

- Ampion has access to multiple solar projects and developers with large capacity allocations. The company currently manages more than 250 solar development projects and is active across 36 utility service territories and eight states.
- Owners can bundle Community Solar and renewable energy certificate (REC) purchases into one offering/contract for each property, allowing them to make specific, marketable renewable energy claims each year.
- Ampion is the only company in this marketplace that has obtained certifications that ensure the use of robust data security controls in line with IHG standards of conduct.
- With appropriate notice, the contract is fully terminable or assignable without penalty in the event of asset sale.