

# Governing **Solar Benefits** as a Transparent, Local Common Good: The **Solar Commons Dashboard**



Technical Session ***Building Solar in Underserved Areas: Rural, Tribal, and Other Communities;***  
**Equity & Access Track** SOLAR 2023 Conference (ASES)

Kathryn Milun, Ph.D.

Founder/Director of The Solar Commons Project

Faculty Affiliate at the University of Minnesota Law School

Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of Minnesota Duluth

# Roadmap of Talk

**Building Shared-Equity Ownership:** a new legal model of community solar benefiting underserved communities

**Digital Dashboard Tool** enabling transparent, accountable sharing of solar savings

Conclusion: how Solar Commons expands **“meaningful benefits of solar”**

# Approaching community solar ownership as a legal anthropologist

## FORMAL LAW



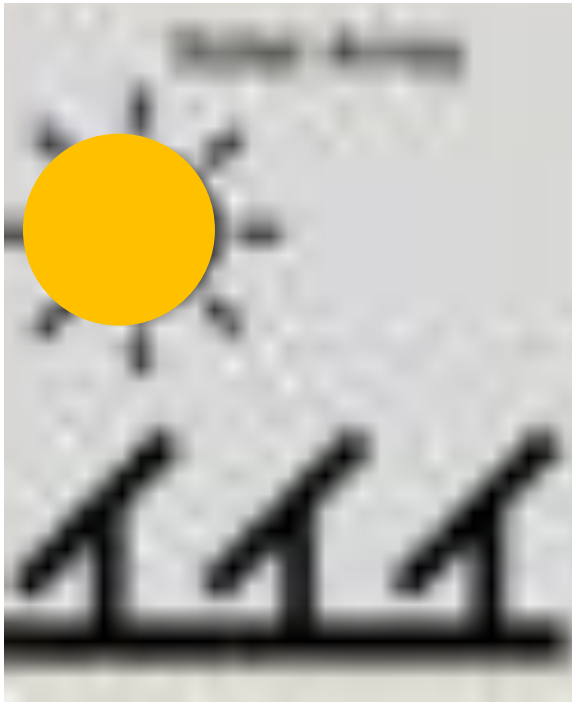
statutes, contracts, policies, regulations

## INFORMAL LAW



rituals, culturally shared practices,  
assumptions, values

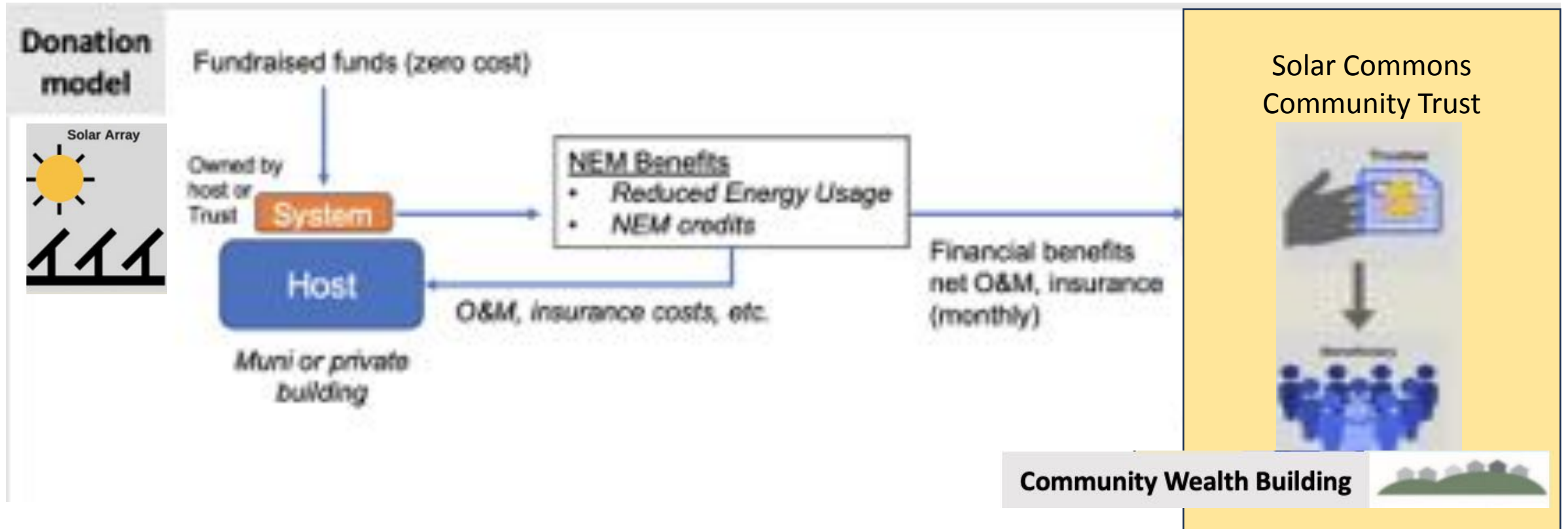
# THE SOLAR COMMONS PROJECT: Use Formal and Informal Law To Shape Solar Technology Into A Tool for Sharing Equity in the Sun's Common Wealth



# Formal Law

+ Donation  
(or loan)

## SOLAR COMMONS COMMUNITY TRUST AGREEMENT (SCA)





# All Parties to the SC Trust Agreement (SCA) are Incentivized & Receive **Benefits from Solar Savings**



Community partners create the 20-year trust agreement.

Purpose of the trust is set by underserved community partner.



Solar savings going to the trust are calculated at a **FIXED RATE**.

As cost of electricity goes up, the host keeps more of the solar savings.



Calculations of solar savings are done in a digital dashboard that is shared by all parties to the trust.

# Informal Law

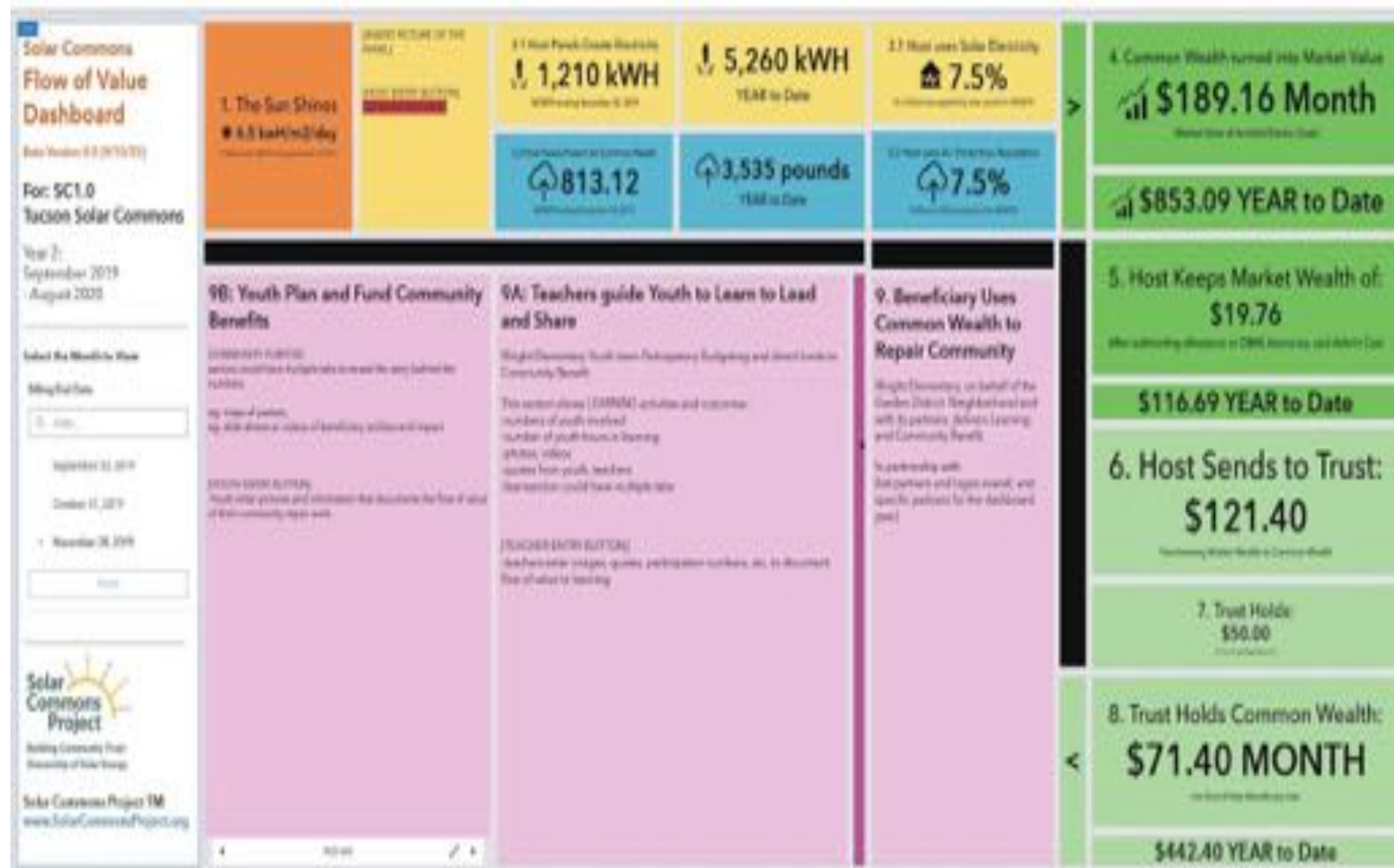
CREATING VISIBLE BENEFITS & OBLIGATIONS

Ritualizing monthly and annual PRACTICES

Holding Parties Accountable

## SHARED GOVERNANCE FLOW OF VALUE DASHBOARD

Creating Transparent, Accountable Shared Governance of the Sun's Common Wealth

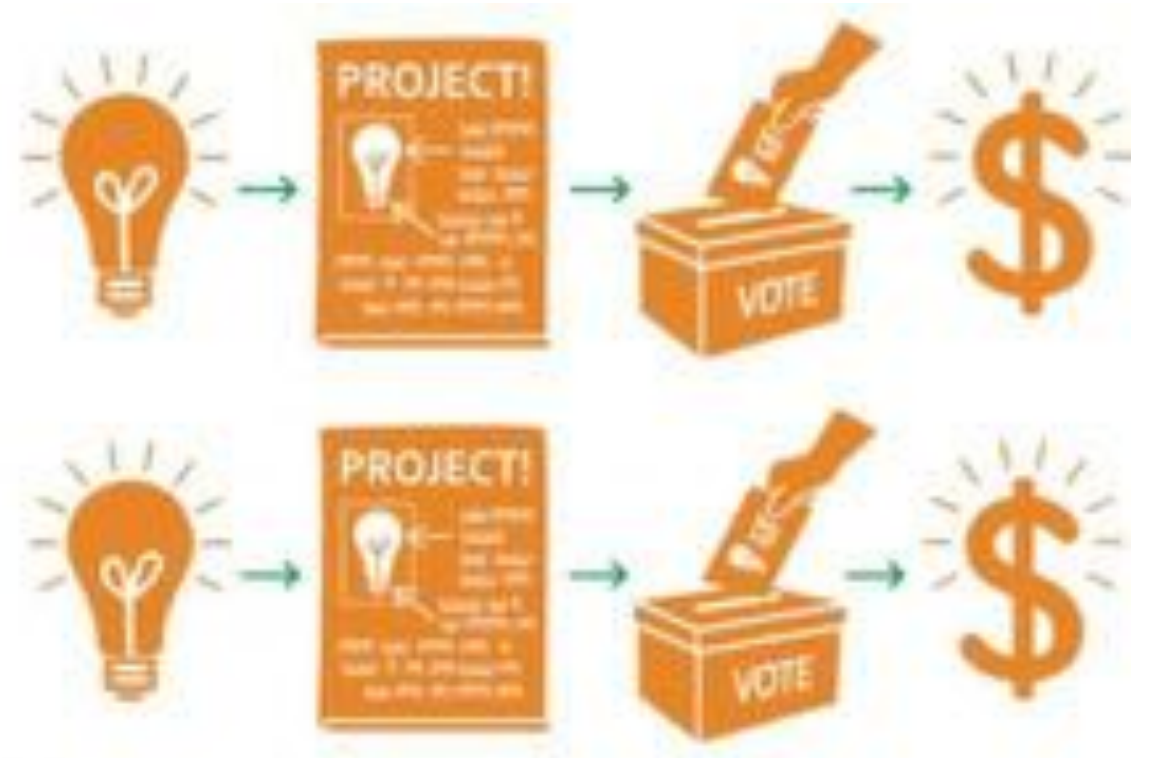


# SC1.0: Distributing Solar Commons trust funds in underserved neighborhoods of TUCSON, ARIZONA



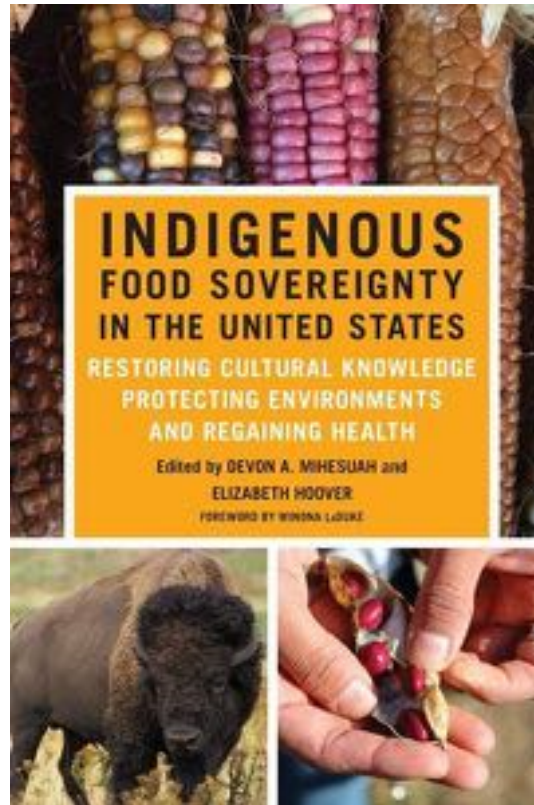
## SCHOOL PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

*Growing cross-curricular civic learning in your school*

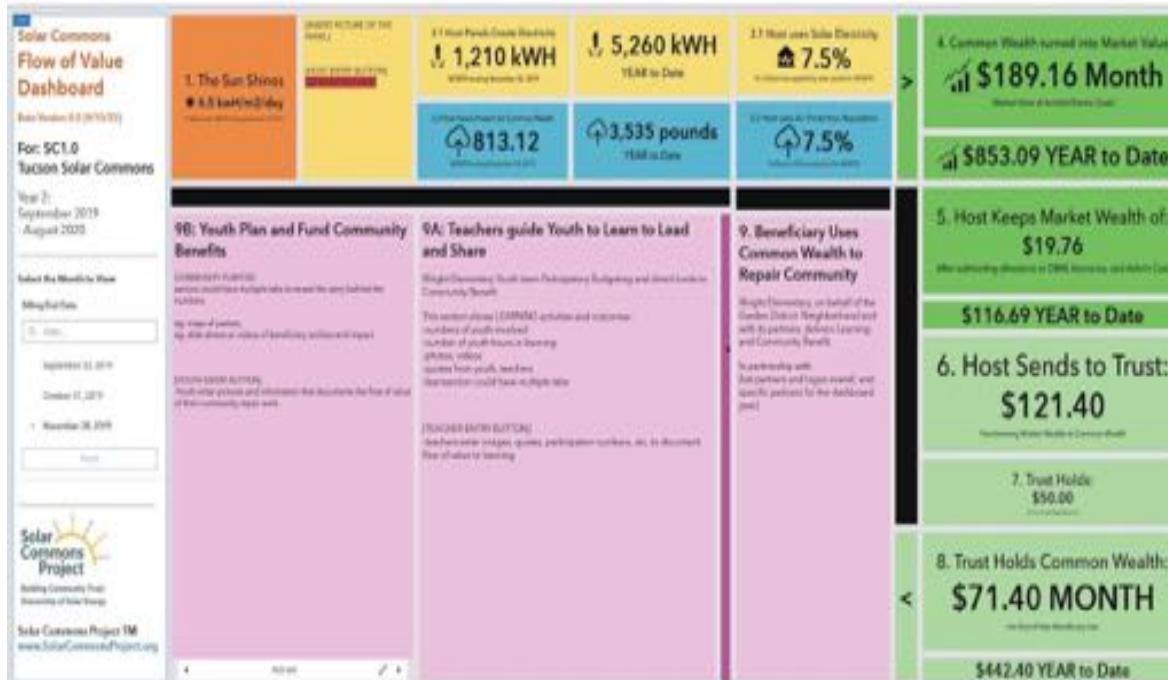




# SC2.0: Distributing Solar Commons trust funds in an underserved rural area of Northern Minnesota



# Ritualizing Shared Solar Equity



Solar Commons 1.0 – Tucson Living Lab  
**COMMONS STATEMENT OF BENEFITS AND OBLIGATIONS (CSBO)**  
 To: SC Host Organization: Dunbar  
 From: SC Trust Protector: Solar Commons (501c3 non-profit)  
 Commons Year 5 - September 1, 2022 to August 31, 2023  
 Monthly Summary for Reporting Month Ending: 9/1/2022  
 Statement Date: Preliminary Draft 2/21/2023

**2018 Capital Funding Investment for Solar Commons Solar Panel at Dunbar Host: \$ 86,000**

*This is the value of the Solar Commons Panel at Dunbar for solar panels plus installation cost.*

*Based on this initial investment and the Solar Commons Agreement (SCA), Dunbar, as Solar Commons Host, has the following benefits and obligations, summarized for the month.*

2100 kWh	Solar Production (CYS estimated)
1411.2 Pounds CO <sub>2</sub> e	Protected Air Common Wealth (prevented CO <sub>2</sub> e emissions)
6.4%	Solar Percent of Total Electric Use
6.4%	Host's Commons Air Protection as a Percentage of avoided emissions from electricity
\$404.47	Market Value of Solar Common Wealth (Gross before expenses and obligations)
\$48.00	Total Monthly Host Expense Allowance
\$17.00	Portion for O&M
\$21.00	Portion for Solar Panel Insurance
\$10.00	Portion for Admin Cost
\$110.47	Host Cash Benefit from Solar Commons
\$246.00	Host's Commons Obligation to Trust

### Dunbar Obligated Actions

- Pay monthly portion to Trust: Remit \$246.00 to Trust at address
- Pay insurance on panels and confirm insurance on panels is in tact
- Upload current insurance rider (annually or when changes occur)

### Dunbar Recommended Actions

- Maintain O&M fund reserve
- Distribute Dunbar Cash benefit to use or fund of choosing
- Communicate the story of your participation in annual report and social media (offer post-able/tweetable suggestions)



# Conclusion: Expanding **Meaningful Benefits of Solar** with Shared-Equity (**Solar Commons**) Ownership

SC BENEFICIARIES SHOWCASE THEIR DEED TO EQUITABLE TITLE OF THE SUN'S COMMON WEALTH THROUGH PUBLIC ART

