

Even on cloudy days, Green Tree nonprofit will be powered by solar

TRIB LIVE triblive.com/local/pittsburgh-allegheeny/even-on-cloudy-days-green-tree-nonprofit-will-be-powered-by-solar/

Tom Davidson February 5, 2020



Tom Davidson | Tribune-Review

Scalo Solar Solutions business development manager Jamie Haberfield, left, and Global Links Executive Director Angela Garcia talk about installation of a solar array on the roof of the Global Links headquarters in Green Tree on Wednesday.



Tom Davidson | Tribune-Review

A solar array is being installed on the roof of the Global Links headquarters in Green Tree on Wednesday.



Tom Davidson | Tribune-Review

The Global Links headquarters in Green Tree on Wednesday.



Tom Davidson | Tribune-Review

Global Links Executive Director Angela Garcia talks about installation of a solar array on the roof of the Global Links headquarters in Green Tree on Wednesday.

It isn't always sunny in Pittsburgh.

But there's enough sunshine to cover at least 82% of the power needs of the Global Links' building in Green Tree, its executive director said.

"Despite Pittsburghers thinking it's cloudy and solar doesn't make sense, it does," Global Links executive director Angela Garcia said, standing on the new, white reflective roof of its Green Tree building. "Even on a day like today, we do have light."

On Wednesday, overcast skies dominated the weather. But Garcia said the white roof will reflect enough light onto the solar array being installed to generate most of the power needs of the building.

Global Links is a nonprofit that collects and recycles medical supplies and home health equipment. Its mission is as much about being environmentally friendly as it is about helping people who need such supplies, Garcia said.

That's the reason Global Links responded to a query from the Pittsburgh-based Pennsylvania Solar Center, a nonprofit that helps organizations find ways to use solar power.

The Pennsylvania Solar Center launched its efforts in 2018, and Global Links worked with it to develop a plan to use solar power and find ways to pay for it.

"It's not a simple process," Garcia said.

With help from the solar center, Global Links was able to get a \$150,000 grant from the Green Mountain Energy Sun Club, another nonprofit that helps organizations pursue projects that are environmentally friendly.

The Global Links project is the first done by the Pennsylvania Solar Center. They worked with Thornburg-based Scalo Solar Solutions to put together the funding package.

Scalo Solar business development manager Jamie Habberfield wouldn't provide specifics about the total cost of the Global Links project. He said the company uses federal tax credits and grants such as the one provided by Green Mountain Energy to put together funding packages to help nonprofits transition to solar power.

The tax credits can cover have the total cost of a project, Habberfield said.

Global Links won't have to use any of its money for the project and will save between \$12,000 to \$15,000 per year, according to Garcia.

About 160 solar panels were installed this week on the Global Links roof, and they'll be operational by spring, Garcia said.

Coupled with installation of LED lighting in the building, the solar array should fully power the building by generating 63.2 kilowatts.

The panels have a lifespan of between 25 and 30 years, Habberfield said.

They'll be visible to motorists passing on the adjacent Parkway West, and the company hopes they will become a "beacon to the community," showing that solar energy is possible and affordable in Pittsburgh, Garcia said.

Tom Davidson is a Tribune-Review staff writer. You can contact Tom at 724-226-4715, tdavidson@tribweb.com or via Twitter .