

# Cornell University

## ABM Energy Installs 2MW Solar Array for Cornell University



One of the most forward-thinking, environmentally conscious universities in the country, Cornell University set out to create its first large solar power array on its Ithaca, NY campus in 2014. As a major component of Cornell's award-winning Climate Action Plan, the project marked a significant step towards University President David J. Skorton's goal of carbon neutrality for the campus by 2050. Cornell has said that solar installations could one day provide 6% of the campus' electricity.

### CHALLENGE

As with most higher education institutions across the country, Cornell needed to find a budget-friendly solution while ensuring that a world-class array would be installed. Since solar projects in New York utilize subsidies, Cornell needed a partner with experience in identifying a financial solution (NYSERDA grants and tax benefits are the main options in New York) to make the project feasible.



Cornell University professors tour the new solar array with ABM's Josh Swafford. Cornell students will have access to the array for educational use.

### SOLUTION

After investigating several financing options, Cornell chose to execute a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) and selected a location for its solar array - in the nearby town of Lansing, NY. However, the project lacked numerous key components to ensure its success, so they turned to ABM's team. Under a tight execution deadline, ABM helped Cornell execute the project through:

- Providing bankable solar Engineering, Procurement and Contracting (EPC) Services of a 6,766 panel array across 10 acres of land
- Design and value engineering of the solar array to bring costs down and increase power production
- A financial solution to make the project feasible by leveraging the New York State Energy Research and Development (NYSERDA's) solar incentive program and funding 100% of the project through the PPA with Cornell.
- Operations and Maintenance for the plant upon completion

"This facility represents a significant step to advance Cornell's clean energy portfolio. The Lansing solar facility aligns with carbon reduction goals of Cornell, Tompkins County and New York State."

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## BENEFIT

The system is designed to significantly reduce Cornell's energy spend through fixed, low-cost rates over the life of a 30-year agreement. Cornell's benefits include:

- The system is expected to save Cornell a minimum of 2.2 million kilowatt hours (kWh) per year on average.
- The solar array will produce about 1% of Cornell's electricity per year – the equivalent to the electricity used in 320 homes.

- The array will reduce carbon pollution by more than 600 tons per year.
- A section of the plant will be designated for academic use, which allows students physical access to manipulate 10 solar panels and access to the Web-based dashboard of the solar array state-of-the-art monitoring software. It is planned that energy and real-time energy use data will be publicly available on the Web.



ABM EPC team installs 2MW solar array for Cornell University

“We are pleased to partner with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), Distributed Sun, LLC, and ABM to launch Cornell's first large solar project.”  
– Cornell Vice President for Facilities Services  
Kyujung Whang



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