

Case Study: 128 West 138th Street, New York City



The Story

128 W 138th street HDFC began their solar journey after attending a Solar Uptown Now (SUN) campaign info session in WE ACT’s offices in Harlem in late May 2017. The SUN campaign was a solar group purchasing campaign led by UHAB, Solar One, and WE ACT where buildings in Northern Manhattan committed to going solar together with a single installer in exchange for discounted pricing through economies of scale.

Following the SUN information session, 128 W 138th st HDFC’s board worked with Solar One to choose a solar array. The board left one section of the roof bare for a future roof deck. They selected a Net Metered system to offset common area usage, and used a ballasted system for a more-cost effective installation. In September 2017, after a few board meetings and phone consultations with Solar One, the building became the first to officially commit to going solar through SUN.

To prepare for installation, the HDFC upgraded their roof with a new protective layer and helped find and evaluate an installer. The Board also tackled other energy efficiency projects with guidance from UHAB, such as LED lighting, which would allow their solar energy system to cover a higher percentage of the common area load. The campaign eventually chose 770 Electric to install the solar arrays. The Board’s efficient and timely communication allowed for a seamless installation.

Project Snapshot

Client: 128 W 138 Street HDFC
Building Type: Limited-income cooperative
Location: Harlem, NY

Financing: Direct Purchase
Solar Installer: Grid City Electric
System Size: 22.32 kW-DC
Modules: 62 LG 360-W
Inverters: Fronius

Lifetime Solar Production: 575,707 kWh
Lifetime CO2 Reduction: 702,363 lbs. (or 351.18 tons)

“We got involved in the Solar One program as an informational thing and it seemed like a really good option for the building. We’d been recently evaluating different capital projects, like facade work and roof refinishing, and it seemed like a good time to add on and do something good for the planet and save money.”

- Kate S., Board Member

After installation, the HDFC spread the good news about solar to the neighborhood by hosting a press conference and filming a video about their solar array. 128 W 138th st HDFC stands as a pioneer in renewable energy for affordable cooperatives. Through a culture of green improvements, open communication, and a little patience with NYC construction timelines, the HDFC was able to make this project into a reality.

Unique Characteristics

Partnership

The solar process for 128 W 138 Street HDFC highlights the value of partners. This solar project is exemplary of a strong partnership that emerged from the Solar Uptown Now! (SUN) Campaign.

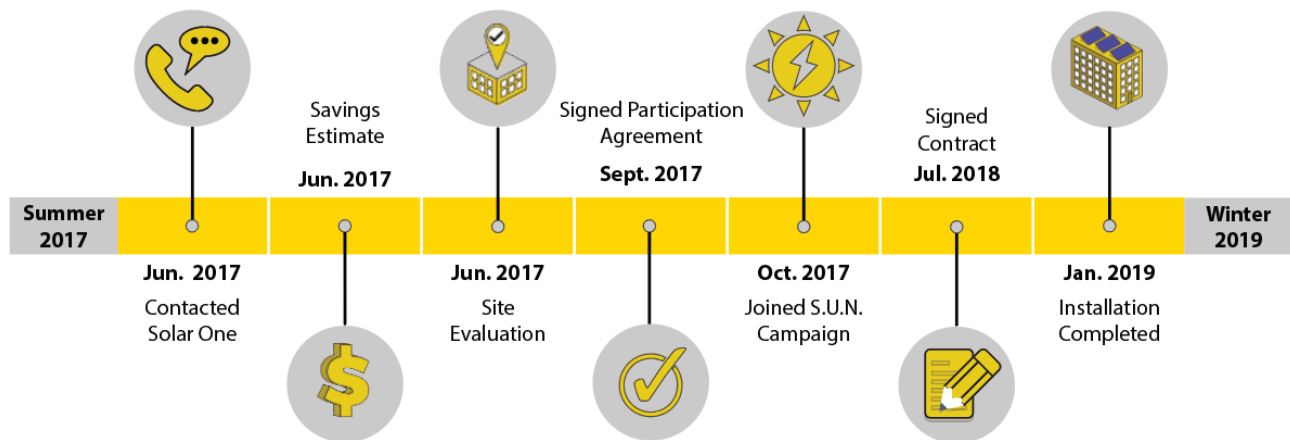
Excellent Rates of Return

Today, 128 W 138 Street HDFC offsets most of their common area electricity usage by having installed solar on their roof at a discounted price and excellent rates of return.

Commitment

The board's continuous involvement and commitment to solar energy was the driving force in the success of this solar project.

Timeline



Economics

Project Cost	\$60,264
Incentives	\$50,778
Net Cost	\$9,486
Annual Savings	\$5,762
Payback Period	3 years
Lifetime Savings	\$182,497

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