



Residential solar power

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Learn how to assess your home's solar potential, options, and needs for going solar. Find resources, tools, and tips for choosing and installing a solar system that suit...

There are a number of mapping services that have been developed by SETO awardees that will help you determine if your roof is suitable for solar and can even provide you with quotes from pre-screened solar providers in your area. In addition to those resources, an internet search can help you find local companies that install solar panels. Because you will likely have many options to choose from, it's important to thoroughly read reviews of solar companies to make sure you are selecting the best fit for you and your home.

Solar co-ops and Solarize campaigns can also help you start the process of going solar. These programs work by allowing groups of homeowners to work together to collectively negotiate rates, select an installer, and create additional community interest in solar through a limited-time offer to join the campaign. Ultimately, as the number of residents who participate in the program increase, the cost of the installations will decrease.

The best way to install solar is through a qualified professional who holds a certification to do so and works with high-quality solar panels. The industry-standard certification is awarded through the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP).

Most people going solar have a positive experience. But like other fast-growing industries, the rampant expansion of solar energy has opened the door to a small subset of bad actors.

On August 7, 2024, the U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury), the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) issued a consumer advisory to help you identify potential consumer solar scams and file complaints about suspicious behavior. Before you sign any documentation with a solar company, carefully review these educational materials:

No one should feel they are being taken advantage of while pursuing clean energy. If you have lost money to a clean energy scam involving fraud, discrimination, or other unfair, deceptive, or abusive practices, federal and state agencies can help.

Storage refers to energy storage, most often in the form of batteries. Installing energy storage with a solar system can help utilize the power generated when it's needed most, regardless of whether it's sunny outside at the time. Storage allows you to save that energy and use it later in the day, like when you turn the heat on at night or run the dishwasher after dinner or even when the power goes out. Ask your solar installer if they offer battery storage options and learn more about storing solar energy.

The amount of money you can save with solar depends upon how much electricity you consume, the size of



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your solar energy system, if you choose to buy or lease your system, and how much power it is able to generate given the direction your roof faces and how much sunlight hits it. Your savings also depend on the electricity rates set by your utility and how much the utility will compensate you for the excess solar energy you send back to the grid. Check the [National Utility Rate Database](#) to see current electricity rates in your area.

In some cities around the country, solar is already cost competitive with the electricity sold by your local utility. The cost of going solar has dropped every year since 2009, a trend researchers expect to continue. Not only are the prices of panels dropping, so are the costs associated with installation, such as permitting and inspection--also known as "soft costs." All of SETO's funding programs are working toward improving the affordability of solar and making it easier for consumers to choose solar.

It should also be noted that energy efficiency upgrades complement solar energy economically. By using Energy Star appliances and other products in your home, you'll need less solar energy to power your home.

Consumers have different financial options to select from when deciding to go solar. In general, a purchased solar system can be installed at a lower total cost than system installed using a solar loan, lease, or power purchase agreement (PPA).

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