



# Solar systems design and installation

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SETO has supported a variety of successful programs that have improved access to technical careers in solar design and installation. Recent training and support programs include:

As subject matter experts, we provide only objective information. We design every article to provide you with deeply-researched, factual, useful information so that you can make informed home electrification and financial decisions. We have:

Incorporated third-party data and information from primary sources, government agencies, educational institutions, peer-reviewed research, or well-researched nonprofit organizations.

We won't charge you anything to get quotes through our marketplace. Instead, installers and other service providers pay us a small fee to participate after we vet them for reliability and suitability. To learn more, read about how we make money, our Dispute Resolution Service, and our Editorial Guidelines.

The process of how solar installers design a solar energy system is often a mystery for most consumers. Because of this, we would like to give you some insight into how solar installers design a solar power system for your home or business. Solar system design takes into account two important factors - the amount of space that you have available for installing solar panels and the amount of electricity you consume annually. Other factors, like shading analysis and the efficiency of solar panels and inverters, also come into play, depending on your property.

Typically, solar panel systems are designed to cover 100% or less of annual usage to maximize the financial benefits, but if you are planning to increase your energy use in the near future - for example, if you are planning to buy an electric car or converting from oil to electric heat pumps - you might consult with your solar consultant to estimate your expected energy demand in order to design a system that better matches that use profile.

As with any big ticket purchase, shopping for a solar panel installation takes a lot of research and consideration, including a thorough review of the companies in your area. A recent report by the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) recommended that consumers compare as many solar options as possible to avoid paying inflated prices offered by the large installers in the solar industry.

To find the smaller contractors that typically offer lower prices, you'll need to use an installer network like EnergySage. You can receive free quotes from vetted installers local to you when you register your property on our Solar Marketplace - homeowners who get three or more quotes can expect to save \$5,000 to \$10,000 on their solar panel installation.

The bigger isn't always better mantra is one of the main reasons we strongly encourage homeowners to consider all of their solar options, not just the brands large enough to pay for the most advertising. A recent report by the U.S. government found that large installers are \$2,000 to \$5,000 more expensive than small solar companies. If you have offers from some of the big installers in solar, make sure you compare those bids with quotes from local installers to ensure you don't overpay for solar.

National-scale installers don't just offer higher prices - they also tend to have fewer solar equipment options, which can have a significant impact on your system's electricity production. By collecting a diverse array of solar bids, you can compare costs and savings based on the different equipment packages available to you.

There are multiple variables to consider when seeking out the best solar panels on the market. While certain panels will have higher efficiency ratings than others, investing in top-of-the-line solar equipment doesn't always result in higher savings. The only way to find the "sweet spot" for your property is to evaluate quotes with varying equipment and financing offers.

For any homeowner in the early stage of shopping for solar that would just like a ballpark estimate for an installation, try our Solar Calculator, that offers upfront cost and long-term savings estimates based on your location and roof type. For those looking to get quotes from local contractors today, check out our quote comparison platform.

Contact us for free full report

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