

SOLAR ENERGY IN MINNESOTA

Interested in investing in solar technology? Surprisingly, Minnesota solar resources are similar to many southern states. Also, solar panels actually work more efficiently in cooler climates. Both these facts make Minnesota the perfect place for solar installations.

Solar energy is renewable, sustainable, and it lowers your utility bill letting you be part of reducing energy consumption, pollution, and global warming. Every unit of electricity produced by solar is a unit that does not need to be produced by burning fossil fuels.

To encourage the use of this clean energy source, Austin, Owatonna, and Rochester Public Utilities offer rebates to customers who install solar electric or solar thermal systems.

ENERGY AUDIT REQUIREMENT

Most experts agree the best way to get full value from your solar system is to perform an energy audit prior to installation. The audit will identify other energy saving opportunities in your home and allow you to repay your solar investment more quickly.

To schedule an energy audit, contact your utility:

Austin Utilities

507.433.8886

www.austinutilities.com

Owatonna Public Utilities

507.451.2480

www.owatonnautilities.com

Rochester Public Utilities

507.280.1500

www.rpu.org

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SOLAR SYSTEM REBATES



TEAMING UP TO SAVE YOU MONEY



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SYSTEM INSTALLATION

One of the very first steps is to identify what kind of system you want or need. If you are unfamiliar with solar technology, the following web sites are good resources that will provide you with information on types of systems, risks and benefits, studies, state and federal incentives, and more. The initial cost of a solar system can be expensive so be sure to do your homework.

Minnesota Department of
Energy Resources:
www.energy.mn.gov

U.S. Department of Energy:
www.eere.doe.gov

National Renewable Energy Laboratory:
www.nrel.gov

Once you have determined what kind of system you'd like, hire a solar expert to help you verify what you want is what you actually need. The experts are able to design systems based on the building's energy usage, space availability, and on your personal goals. At the same time, they can perform a shading analysis. The shading analysis will determine whether or not your location is suitable for a photovoltaic (PV) system, and whether there are any issues with the building or location that will need to be addressed.

**See rebate application for installation and equipment requirements.*

SOLAR ELECTRICITY

Solar electricity or photovoltaics convert sunlight into electricity. The process, although slightly complicated, is familiar to most of us in the form of solar powered calculators which use small photovoltaic (PV) cells to power the device.

The rebate for customers who install a solar photovoltaic system is \$1 per system watt for systems between 0.5 kW and 10 kW. A shading analysis, interconnection agreement, and invoices must also be provided.*

STEPS TO RECEIVE A SOLAR ELECTRIC REBATE

1. Customer notifies their utility of plans to install a PV system.
2. Customer has an energy audit conducted on the proposed site and shares results with their utility. *(If an audit has been conducted on site in the last three years, this step can be skipped.)*
3. Customer fills out the Generation Interconnection application.
4. If application is approved, the utility prepares and mails all interconnection documents and a rebate application to the customer.
5. Customer fills out all documents and returns them to their utility, along with the shading analysis and invoices.
6. Utility orders meter.
7. Utility and the city building and safety department inspect the installed PV system before issuing a rebate check.

SOLAR THERMAL ENERGY

Solar thermal energy systems capture the heat of the sun and use it to heat water for domestic use. Solar thermal systems are meant to supplement a building's hot water and space heating systems; they are not intended to replace them.

Utility rebates of \$15 per square foot net aperture (up to \$1,200) are available for solar domestic hot water systems. Rochester customers must have an electric water heater to apply for the solar thermal rebate.*

STEPS TO RECEIVE A SOLAR HOT WATER REBATE

1. Customer notifies their utility of plans to install a solar thermal water heating system.
2. Customer has an energy audit conducted on the proposed site and shares results with their utility. *(If an audit has been conducted on site in the last three years, this step can be skipped.)*
3. If application is approved, the utility will prepare and mail a rebate application to the customer.
4. Customer fills out all documents and returns them to their utility, along with shading analysis and invoices.
5. Utility and the city building and safety department inspect the installed hot water system before issuing a rebate check.