

Considering Solar? Here Are Some Helpful Tips

Linn County REC has received several inquiries from members considering their solar options. Not surprising, given the large number of companies advertising solar systems, some are promising unrealistic expectations.

If you are considering installing solar at your home, shop, or business to help supply your energy needs, here are some helpful tips.

Utility's Role

Linn County REC is neutral when it comes to solar or solar contractors. Our priority is to help members make informed decisions, ensure the safety of all parties involved, and meet all interconnection requirements. We will answer questions you may have about your usage and assist where we can.

Rates

It is important to understand utility rates and impacts before purchasing a system. Our rate designs are not guaranteed and may change in the future. Linn County REC does not grandfather member rates. Contact our office to speak with an Energy Advisor for current rate information and usage history. Also, visit our website to learn more.

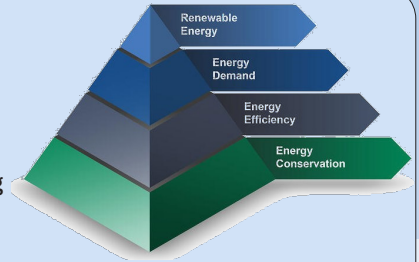
Rebates

Linn County REC does not offer rebates for solar installation. However, we do offer our members monthly net metering. Any excess kilowatt hours produced by members during a month is paid at our power supplier's avoided energy cost. Excess production will be converted to money and be used towards our services charges; any remaining money is applied as a bill credit.

Financing

Financing has been a popular method of purchasing solar systems. Review the loan agreement before buying the system and know if the purchase price changes with financing. Lenders may require a Uniform Commercial Code financing statement (UCC-1) to be filed on the solar system and the right to repossess the solar system in case of default.

The key to decrease the cost of solar is to start at the bottom and work your way up. First, learn ways to conserve energy within your home or business. Next, work up to energy efficiency by upgrading equipment and air sealing to increase your efficiency. Next, concentrate on when you are using energy and if you can adjust your usage to off-peak hours. Lastly, once you have completed those three, then investigate renewable energy. By doing this step last, you will reduce the size of system you need to purchase and save even more in the future.



Getting Quotes

Getting multiple quotes for any significant purchase is recommended, including a solar system. Ask family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers who they used and if they are satisfied with the work. They will be your best resource. Do your research before getting quotes and ask the following:

- If installing rooftop solar panels, what is the cost to reinstall the system if the roof needs to be replaced in the future?
- Will the same company selling the system be doing the installation?
- Do you need additional insurance coverage for a system?
- Who will service the system after installation?
- What energy inflation rate is used to determine potential savings?

Also, be sure to review:

- Iowa business licenses and electrical licenses.
- Monthly production and compare to monthly usage.
- Terms and conditions of the system's warranty.

If you plan to install solar or any other renewable energy source, please review Linn County REC's interconnection policy and frequently asked questions available on our website. It has information regarding specific requirements of Linn County REC and the Iowa Utilities Board that need to be followed when interconnecting. An interconnection application should be submitted and approved before installation to ensure that all requirements are met before interconnecting.