

Solar FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

Can I install a solar system if I don't have roof space on my house?

Yes! You can install a solar system on an outbuilding, such as a shed, barn or garage, or you can install a ground mount system. All that is required is that you have enough space and good sunlight.

Do I have to have a battery backup or go off-grid to install solar?

No. You can connect your system into the grid. Many solar users decide not to get batteries. Systems that are connected to the larger grid are commonly referred to as “grid-tied systems.” Whether or not you get battery backup is completely up to you. If you do not have battery backup, there will be no major differences in your experience as an electric user from pre-installation. Without battery backup, you will not be able to use electricity in the event of a blackout.

What incentives are available in Wyoming?

The federal **Residential Renewable Energy Tax Credit** is currently available to Wyoming citizens who install solar systems on their homes. This credit allows you to claim 30% of the cost of your system as a tax credit. This does mean that you have to owe enough in taxes to claim the credit, but if you do, it is a great incentive! The last full year for the tax credit will be 2019, but you can still claim a 26% credit during 2020 and a 22% credit during 2021. The tax credit will no longer be available after December 31st, 2021.

Net Metering allows solar users to “bank” or save credits during times of overproduction and apply them to electricity bills during times of lower production (see below for a more detailed explanation).

The **Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) grant** is available to most small Wyoming businesses. This program is available through the United States Department of Agriculture and will pay for up to 25% of the cost of a solar system. See our solar resources list for additional information on this program.

The Rocky Mountain Power **Blue Sky Program** is available only in areas of the state that are serviced by Rocky Mountain Power. The program is available to qualifying non-profit businesses and organizations and pays for most or all of the cost of a solar installation. Follow the link in our solar resources list to learn more.

What is “Net Metering”?

Net metering is a system of tracking solar production on an individual system. It allows solar users to “bank” energy credits from times of overproduction (when your system is generating more electricity than you are using, often during mid-day and summer months) and apply those credits when you are using more electricity than your system is generating (usually during mornings, evenings and wintertime). On January 1st, the utility company will pay you a small amount for any leftover credits and your billing year will start fresh.

If I can't afford to install an entire system, can I install in phases?

Yes. Most solar installers in Wyoming will work with you to install a small system (just a couple of panels and an inverter) to begin with. Once your initial system is installed, you can add panels as you can afford them. Use our Solar Installer Directory to locate Wyoming installers and ask them if they will work with you to install in phases!

There are some really cheap offers on the internet...should I go with them?

We recommend using Wyoming installers. When you go with out of state companies, you are left with no-one to turn to if you have an issue with your system. While problems with solar systems are rare, an in-state installer will be able to fix anything that may go wrong. Most Wyoming installers will fix problems that occur during a set period of time with no additional charges. Use our Solar Installer Directory (listed in our solar resources) to contact installers and ask them about what kind of repair window they offer.

Can I get a loan to install a solar system?

In many cases, you may be able to get a loan to cover the upfront costs of installing a solar system. Many banks in Wyoming work with specific installers, but others offer loans to anyone with good credit who is interested in installing a system. We don't have a comprehensive list of banks that are offering loans at this time, but you can learn more by talking to installers to see if they have a bank that works with them or by calling your bank to see if they have a program to offer solar loans.

Is it worth installing solar in a place as far north as Wyoming?

Absolutely! Wyoming may be located in the northern part of the country, but it actually has some of the best sun! Wyoming ranks 8th in "solar resources" (figured by length of day, angle of the sun, strength of solar radiation, and number of sunny days). We have about the same rating for solar energy as Arizona!

How long will it take for my solar system to pay for itself in savings?

That depends on numerous factors, including how much energy you use and how much your system ends up costing. The best way to find out is to talk to installers. Solar installers will be able to look at the factors that affect the payoff time of your system and give you an estimate of how long it will take before your system pays for itself. In very general terms, most solar owners in Wyoming experience a 7-15 year payback time and most solar systems are warranted for 20 years or more.

If I don't own my house, is there any way for me to use solar power?

Some utilities offer Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) that you can purchase to offset your electricity use. Contact your utility to see if there is a program in your area. Unfortunately, "community solar" or shared solar installations are not currently available in Wyoming and it would require legislative changes to make them available. If this is something you would like to see, contact your representatives and let them know!