



Solar for Your Home

Guiding you Through the Process

Many people are interested in solar energy to meet their home energy needs. However, the process of a solar energy project can be confusing. *Milwaukee Shines* is here to help!

The information below provides details about the basics of solar, financing available, and what it takes to get solar installed on your home. *Milwaukee Shines*, the City of Milwaukee's solar energy program, works to expand solar energy use, and help homeowners through the solar financing and installation process.

Get a Site Assessment

To get started, it is recommended that a homeowner has a site assessment. This is the best way to determine how solar can meet the energy needs of a home. A site assessment will provide a basic analysis of energy needs and the solar availability at the home.

The site assessment will provide a report with the best location for a solar energy system and a general cost estimate. The Midwest Renewable Energy Association provides a list of site assessors working in Wisconsin. To locate one near you visit www.mreacsa.org or call 715-592-6595.

Find an Installer

It is recommended to get more than one estimate, as prices and services vary from installer to installer. An estimate should include the costs of hardware, shipping, installation, connection to the utility grid, and permits. An installer will also help acquire permits, identify incentives, and connect to the utility.

There is no state certification for solar installers. However, many installers are [NABCEP](http://www.nabcep.org) (North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners) Certified. This national certification requires coursework through accredited training programs, designing and installing specified number of solar installs, and passing a professional technical exam.

Milwaukee Shines and Milwaukee's energy efficiency program, *Me²*, provide residents with a list of participating installers and consultants for you to choose from. Visit www.smartenergypays.com to find



This Milwaukee home uses solar to produce electricity.
Photo courtesy of: Pieper Power

a solar installer in the greater Milwaukee area. If you live outside the City of Milwaukee, find a list of solar installers at www.finditwithfocus.com.

Installation Requirements

To aid in guiding you through the process, Milwaukee Shines provides a Solar Permitting Guide that details permitting and interconnection requirements. Every solar energy system installation needs to comply with zoning and building codes of the City of Milwaukee or other municipalities where the installation will be located. Once you are ready to do work, permits need to be obtained before construction begins.

If you choose to connect your solar electric system to the utility grid, the installer will contact the Milwaukee area utility, We Energies, for an interconnection application. Wisconsin utilities are required to connect a solar electric system to their utility. Wisconsin utilities are also required to net meter (up to 20 kilowatts) which means that utilities buy excess solar energy at retail rate.

You should also consider if your site is well suited for solar. Think about if you have good access to the sun. For example, is your roof facing south? Are there a lot of trees or buildings that would block the sun? These are questions you can evaluate early in the process, and work with your installer to try to address.

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Incentives

There are many ways to finance a solar energy project. By using a combination of solar financing and incentives that are currently available, solar is more realistic than ever for Milwaukee homeowners.

There is a 30% federal tax credit for qualified for solar installations (no cap on project costs). Costs eligible for the tax credit include labor, assembly, parts, and interconnection costs.

If the tax credit exceeds tax liability, the excess amount may be carried over to the succeeding taxable year through 2016.

Wisconsin's state energy program, Focus on Energy, provides a range of incentives based on project type and size. Focus on Energy offers rebates for solar energy projects.

For residential systems, the solar electric rebate is \$600/kW DC rated capacity up to \$2,400. The solar hot water rebate is \$0.35/kWh saved or \$6/Therm saved up to \$1,200. Details on incentives can be found at: www.dsireusa.org. More information on WI incentives can be found at: www.focusonenergy.com.

Financing Solutions

Milwaukee Shines offers solar financing for Milwaukee homeowners. Solar financing provides *Milwaukee Shines* low-interest loans to homeowners for solar electric and solar hot water projects.

These low-interest solar loans are eligible for expenses on all equipment, labor, permits, and interconnection fees. To learn more about Milwaukee Shines Solar Financing, visit: www.milwaukeeushines.com/solarloans.



This Milwaukee home meets all its electrical needs with solar
Photo courtesy of: H&H Solar

Resources

Milwaukee Shines	Milwaukee solar program www.MilwaukeeShines.com
Me ²	Milwaukee Energy Efficiency www.smartenergypays.com
OES	City of Milwaukee's Office of Environmental Sustainability www.milwaukee.gov/sustainability
Focus on Energy	WI energy program www.focusonenergy.com
DSIREUSA	National incentive database www.dsireusa.org
MREA	Midwest Renewable Energy Assoc www.midwestrenew.org
NABCEP	National certified installer listing www.nabcep.org