

SOLAR SCIENCE

1. How does a solar panel produce electricity?

Solar panels convert sunlight into electricity using photovoltaic (PV) cells that generate a flow of electricity when exposed to light.

2. Can solar panels be recycled?

Yes, materials like glass, aluminum, and silicon in solar panels can be recovered and reused.

3. Are all solar panels pretty much the same?

No, solar panels differ in efficiency, cost, and lifespan. Monocrystalline panels are more efficient but costlier, while polycrystalline and thin-film options vary in performance and price.

4. How long do solar panels last?

Solar panels typically last 25–30 years, with efficiency gradually decreasing over time.

5. Can I put solar panels on an east-facing or west-facing roof?

Yes, but they'll produce less energy compared to south-facing roofs. However, they can still provide significant savings.

INCENTIVES

1. Will solar incentives go away if the [Inflation Reduction Act](#) is repealed?

Federal incentives may change, but state and local incentives often remain independent.

2. What is the REAP program?

The Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) offers grants and loans to farms and rural small businesses to install renewable energy, including solar.

3. Can people with lower incomes afford solar?

Yes, programs like Illinois Solar for All, tax credits, and grants make solar more affordable for lower-income households.

4. What are solar tax credits?

Solar tax credits reduce the amount of taxes you owe by a percentage of your system cost, such as the federal 30% Investment Tax Credit (ITC).

5. What are solar renewable energy credits (SRECs)?

The A Solar Renewable Energy Credit (SREC) is a tradable certificate earned for producing solar energy, representing one megawatt-hour (MWh) of electricity, which can be sold to meet renewable energy mandates programs.

6. How does a solar system create SREC?

A solar system generates SRECs by producing electricity; for every 1 megawatt-hour (MWh) of solar energy generated, the system earns one SREC.

7. How many SRECs will a 10 kW system generate?

A 10 kW solar system typically generates around 13,000 kWh (13 MWh) of electricity annually, earning approximately 13 SRECs per year.



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8. Who administers the SREC programs in Illinois?

In Illinois, the Adjustable Block Program (ABP) administers SREC programs, managed by the Illinois Power Agency (IPA) and implemented by its designated program administrator.

9. What are the Illinois Shines and Illinois Solar for All Programs?

[Illinois Shines](#): A state program under the Adjustable Block Program (ABP) that supports the development of new solar projects by providing Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SRECs) as financial incentives. It covers residential, commercial, and community solar projects.

10. [Illinois Solar for All](#) (ILSFA): A state program designed to provide low-income **(alternative wording: income-eligible)** communities with affordable access to solar energy. It offers incentives for solar installations, emphasizing reduced energy costs and workforce development for underserved populations..

11. Are there rebates for solar installations?

Yes, many states, utilities, and manufacturers offer rebates to lower upfront installation costs. See [ComEd's Distributed Generation \(DG\) Rebate programs](#).

COMMUNITY SOLAR

1. What is community solar?

Community solar allows you to subscribe to a solar farm and receive credits on your electric bill without installing panels on your property.

2. What happens if I move?

You can usually transfer your subscription within the same utility service area.

3. Do I own the solar panels in community solar?

No, community solar participants subscribe to the energy produced by the solar farm but do not own the panels.

4. Is community solar cheaper than traditional electricity?

Yes, community solar can save you money by reducing your electricity costs through bill credits. These credits usually offset a portion of the electricity charges

5. Who manages community solar farms?

Community solar farms are managed by developers, utilities, or third-party organizations.

JOBS

1. What types of jobs are available in solar?

Roles include installation, sales, design, engineering, maintenance, project management, and manufacturing.

2. Do solar jobs require a degree?

Not always; many positions, such as installation, require certifications like NABCEP instead of degrees.



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3. Are solar jobs in high demand?

Yes, solar energy is a rapidly growing field with increasing demand for skilled workers.

4. What certifications are helpful for solar jobs?

Certifications like NABCEP (North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners) are highly valued.

5. Can I work in solar without experience?

Yes, entry-level positions like solar installer are available, and on-the-job training is often provided.

FINANCES

1. How much does solar cost?

Solar systems typically cost \$36,000 before incentives for a standard home system.

2. Is financing available for solar?

Yes, options include loans, leases, and power purchase agreements (PPAs).

3. How much can I save with solar?

First-year energy savings can vary based on energy usage and location. For community solar, savings are typically around 20%, while a solar system designed to offset 100% of a home's energy needs can provide full electricity cost savings.

4. Are there maintenance costs for solar?

Maintenance costs are minimal, with occasional cleaning and inspections.

5. Does solar increase home value?

Yes, homes with solar systems often sell for more and faster than homes without solar.

6. What financial returns make solar a great investment?

A strong solar investment typically offers a 20% or higher internal rate of return (IRR) and a simple payback period of less than 5 years for a cash purchase.

REGULATIONS

1. Does a solar installer need a permit?

Yes, permits ensure compliance with local codes and safety standards.

2. Who oversees solar in Illinois?

The Illinois Power Agency (IPA) oversees solar incentives and programs.

3. What organizations oversee solar renewable energy credits in Illinois?

The Illinois Power Agency (IPA) oversees solar incentives and programs.

4. Can rural electric coop customers get solar?

It depends on the coop's policies; some offer community solar, while others may not.

5. What are net metering rules?

Net metering allows solar customers to get credit for excess energy sent back to the grid. Rules vary by state and utility.



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6. What can a homeowner do after net metering goes away?

After net metering, homeowners can install a battery energy storage system to store excess solar energy for use later. Batteries can also charge during off-peak utility rates and discharge during peak hours, lowering energy costs and reducing grid reliance.

7. Are there inspections after solar installation?

Yes, inspections ensure the system meets safety and code requirements.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

1. How can I tell if a solar installer is legitimate?

Check for certifications, licensing, and customer reviews. NABCEP and Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) Distributed Generation installers are a reliable choice.

2. Are solar contracts binding?

Yes, but you have a legal right to review and cancel within a specified period in some states.

3. What warranties are typical for solar?

Panels usually come with 20–25 year performance warranties, and inverters often have 10–15 year warranties.

4. Should I get multiple quotes for solar?

Yes, comparing quotes helps ensure competitive pricing and reliable service.

5. Are there scams in the solar industry?

Unfortunately, yes. Avoid unlicensed installers and verify claims before signing a contract.

INSTALLERS

1. How can I find a local solar installer?

Use directories like EnergySage or NABCEP, or check with your utility.

2. Do installers provide warranties?

Yes, most provide warranties for both equipment and workmanship.

3. Should I choose a local or national installer?

Both have benefits. Local companies often provide personalized service, while national companies may have broader resources.

4. What should I ask my installer?

Ask about certifications, experience, warranties, and system performance expectations.

5. How long does installation take?

Installation typically takes 1–3 days, but permitting and utility approval may take weeks.



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