



# Power\$aver<sup>TM</sup> Program

## RESIDENTIAL SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) INCENTIVE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

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These guidelines govern the procedures and qualifications for incentives under the Austin Energy Residential Solar Photovoltaic ("PV") Incentive Program.

### I. Eligible Customers

- A. Residential incentive applicants must either have an Austin Energy residential electric utility account or own the property that has, or will have, an Austin Energy residential electric utility account at the service address where the PV system is to be installed, and the PV system must be interconnected behind a residential net meter.
- B. Customers installing PV systems on secondary meters (i.e. not on the primary residence) at residential properties may apply to the Commercial Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Performance-Based Incentive program.
- C. PV systems must be owned by the incentive applicant.

### II. Incentive Funding

- A. The incentive level for qualifying equipment is adjusted according to a ramp-down schedule. To reference the incentive level and available capacity, please visit, [Austin Energy's website](#).
- B. The incentive will be calculated as: [number of PV modules] x [Standard Test Condition (STC) rating per PV module (Watts)] x [incentive level]. The incentive payment may be capped or denied based on the following limitations:
  - 1. No incentive is available for a PV system sized to produce more than 100% of the annual energy consumption on-site. This shall be determined based on historical usage for existing buildings or modeled consumption for new construction or alterations.
  - 2. Incentives will be capped at the first 12.05kW DC (10kW AC) of solar PV installed at a property. Any additional capacity will not be eligible for Austin Energy incentives.
  - 3. The maximum incentive amount is 50% of invoiced costs for eligible solar panels, inverters, balance of system, service panel upgrades, labor, and requisite permits. These incentive-applicable, invoiced costs shall not include costs for other services or products, such as battery storage, energy efficiency, or structural upgrades.
  - 4. Incentives for systems with a capacity of less than 2.41kW DC (2kW- AC) require special approval, and must demonstrate that the PV system will produce more than 50% of the energy for the connected loads.
  - 5. Final incentive amount will be based on eligible installed panels only and may vary from the amount noted in the LOI.
- C. Austin Energy makes no financial commitment to applicants until a signed Letter of Intent (LOI) is issued. The Letter of Intent (LOI) is valid for 120 days for PV system installations on existing residences, and 365 days for PV systems to be located on new construction projects.
- D. Under extenuating circumstances, applicants may request extensions to their LOI. Requests for LOI extension must be submitted prior to LOI expiration, in writing, accompanied by a detailed explanation of the reason for the delay. Contractor must demonstrate that the cause of the delay is out of their control along with substantial progress toward project completion. Extensions will be granted at the sole discretion of Austin Energy.
- E. Customers have the option to receive the incentive payment directly or assign it to their solar contractor or another party. If assigned, this must be noted on the final invoice to the customer. Incentive payments will be issued within 4 weeks after the system passes final inspections and all required documentation is submitted and approved.

***Austin Energy guidelines and incentive levels are subject to change without prior notice, and Austin Energy reserves the right to refuse any application or request for incentive payment for systems that do not meet all program requirements.***

### III. Installation and Warranty Requirements

- A. In order to qualify for the Austin Energy Solar Incentive, the customer must have a contract directly with a participating contractor who must submit the application for incentive on the customer's behalf.
- B. The PV system must be permitted and installed by a participating contractor, listed on Austin Energy's residential solar incentive program website.
- C. Only participating contractors (listed on the Austin Energy website and in good standing) may offer and market the Austin Energy solar incentive. Participating solar contractors may not submit customer applications on behalf of other companies not on the Austin Energy list of participating contractors, e.g. as a subcontractor to a suspended company or solar sales company which is not a participating contractor in the program.
- D. The PV system must be electrically interconnected and attached to permanent, non-mobile structures.
- E. Equipment must be listed by the California Energy Commission on its website, [www.gosolarcalifornia.org](http://www.gosolarcalifornia.org), to be eligible.
- F. All major solar energy system components eligible for incentives must be new and have a minimum 10-year warranty to protect against defects and undue degradation of electrical generation output.
- G. The participating contractor must warrant the PV system installation for a minimum of 10 years.
- H. The participating contractor must advise the customer of the potential for vermin-caused damage and mitigation options.
- I. The roof on which the PV system is to be installed must have a minimum of ten years of usable (warranted) life remaining.
- J. All roof penetrations must be flashed, unless pre-approved by Austin Energy. Requests for approval should be accompanied by compatibility documentation from the racking system manufacturer specific to the roof type that it is to be installed on, and written acknowledgement by the home owner that they have been notified that the roof will be penetrated and what method of attachment will be used.
- K. Clamping attachments (such as S-5 Clamps) must be rated by the manufacturer to be compatible with the roofing system.
- L. AC & DC surge protection are required.
- M. All PV systems must be interconnected to Austin Energy's electrical grid, at customer's expense, in accordance with Austin Energy's *Distribution Interconnection Guide*, which can be found at the Electric Service Design & Planning section of the Austin Energy website.
- N. Contractor must include all costs, including any required service upgrades (such as service panel, weatherhead, wiring, etc.), in the original bid. Costs that are not eligible for federal tax credits or local incentives must be itemized separately.
- O. Licensed electricians must obtain all appropriate permits and perform all electrical work. A separate permit may be required for electric service upgrades.
- P. Installation must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations, and must be according to manufacturer's standards. In some municipal jurisdictions within the Austin Energy service territory, building permits are required for PV system installations.
- Q. The STC rating of the system [STC rating of panels x number of panels] shall not exceed 125% of the associated inverter rating. Exceptions may be granted if system has multiple orientations which would limit the coincidental production and the impacts of oversizing the inverter. The submittal of a letter from the manufacturer stating that the design is approved and will not void the warranty is also required.
- R. NABCEP certified installer must review the layout and system design prior to submittal, and include NABCEP certification number and signature on each document.
- S. For PV system installations on flat roof structures, ground mounted, mounted in a manner that is not in alignment with the contour of the roof, or if the module(s) extend beyond the roof plane, an engineer stamped drawing is required by the Austin Energy inspector prior to scheduling an electric inspection.
- T. **AUSTIN ENERGY IS NOT A MANUFACTURER, SUPPLIER, OR GUARANTOR OF PV EQUIPMENT OR CONTRACTORS. AUSTIN ENERGY, WHETHER BY MAKING AVAILABLE A LIST OF PARTICIPATING CONTRACTORS AND EQUIPMENT SOURCES OR OTHERWISE, MAKES NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES OF ANY NATURE, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, AS TO PERFORMANCE OF THE CONTRACTOR OR RELIABILITY, PERFORMANCE, DURABILITY, CONDITION, OR QUALITY OF ANY PV SYSTEM.**

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#### IV. Solar Access Requirements

- A. Austin Energy may deny incentives based on excessive shading or poor orientation of the proposed solar array. Incentives will not be issued unless solar access requirements are met.
- B. When evaluating the solar access for a central inverter PV system, the entire array must be assessed under the same criteria and comply with the standards set forth in this document.
- C. For systems using micro inverters or devices that allow for module level maximum power point tracking, each module must individually comply with the standards set forth in this document.
- D. The solar module(s) must have at least 6 continuous hours of solar access per day year-round according to the following criteria.
  1. The solar window for systems oriented at 90° to 120° must have an Eastern “horizon view”, with unobstructed solar access from ½ hour after sunrise until 2:00pm solar time year-round. Systems with tilts 15 degrees or less must have a solar window that includes the hours of 8:00am to 2:00pm solar time<sup>1</sup>.
  2. The solar window for systems oriented at 120° to 150° must have a solar window that includes the hours of 8:00am to 2:00pm solar time.
  3. The solar window for systems oriented at 150° to 220° must have a solar window that falls between the hours of 8:00am to 2:00pm, or 9:00am to 3:00pm, or 10:00am to 4:00pm solar time.
  4. The solar window for systems oriented at 220° to 250° must have a solar window that includes the hours of 10:00am to 4:00pm solar time.
  5. The solar window for systems oriented at 250° to 300° must have a Western “horizon view”, with unobstructed solar access from 10:00am solar time to ½ hour to sunset year round. Systems with tilts 15 degrees or less must have a solar window that includes the hours of 10:00am to 4:00pm solar time.
  6. Systems with tilt degrees of 5 or less, regardless of orientation, must have a solar window that falls between the hours of 8:00am to 2:00pm, or 9:00am to 3:00pm, or 10:00am to 4:00pm solar time.
- E. Refer to the chart below for acceptable tilt angles and orientations (provided the system design also meets the solar access requirements listed above).

Solar PV Rebate Table

Tilt/Azimuth	North				Due								Due				Due					
	west				West								South					East				
	300	290	280	270	260	250	240	230	220	210	200	190	180	170	160	150	140	130	120	110	100	90
0°																						
5°																						
10°																						
15°	Shaded Azimuth's and Tilt Angles Qualify for Rebates																					
20°																						
25°																						
30°																						
35°																						
40°																						
45°																						
50°																						
55°																						
60°																						

<sup>1</sup> In solar time, noon is always when the sun is at its apex, unlike clock time.

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## V. Home Energy Efficiency Requirements

- A. A home 10 years old or older that has not participated in the Home Performance with Energy Star program within the last 10 years must undertake a home energy assessment through a qualified Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® (HPwES) contractor.
  - 1. A cost estimate for the recommended work must be submitted.
  - 2. Alternatively, a statement may be submitted on the HPwES contractor's letterhead, attesting that there are no recommended energy efficiency improvements or that the home does not qualify to participate in the HPwES program, subject to verification.

## VI. Required Documentation

- A. At the time of application:
  - 1. Proposed system layout, including a NABCEP Installer's endorsement
  - 2. Signed Customer Agreement
- B. At the time of final inspection request:
  - 1. Final system layout, if changed from proposed
  - 2. Wire diagram, including a NABCEP Installer's endorsement
  - 3. String sizing calculations for all string inverter configurations; in the case of micro inverters or optimizers a compatibility statement
  - 4. Equipment serial numbers; including all string inverters, and at minimum one serial number (plus qty.) for all batch purchased equipment (PV modules, micro inverters, or AC modules)
  - 5. Customer signed final contract(s) and amendments, including:
    - a. Customer name and installation address.
    - b. Participating contractor name and contact address.
    - c. Make, model, and quantities of all solar module and inverter equipment included in costs.
    - d. Installation 10-year warranty statement.
    - e. Total solar installation cost. Costs that are not eligible for federal tax credits or local incentives must be itemized separately.
    - f. Final rebate amount (based on qualified equipment) and assigned recipient.
  - 6. Customer signed Microgenerator Listing Form
  - 7. Photograph(s) of completed array, including racking (prior to panel installation), the back one panel, and conduit runs.
  - 8. Photograph(s) of wall mounted equipment
- C. Electronic signatures must not be a type font unless they include a verifiable tracking method

## VII. Additional Requirements

- A. Incentive applicant must transfer to Austin Energy all renewable energy credits (RECs) and other environmental attributes (other than tax credits) from power generated by the PV system.
- B. Customer must sign the Renewable Energy Credit Microgenerator Listing Form
- C. REC agreement must be disclosed to homebuyers upon the sale of the home that received PV incentives, and a Microgenerator Listing Form must be included in the home transfer documents to be submitted to Austin Energy upon the transfer of the electric service to the new homeowner.
- D. Customer is responsible for maintaining the operational efficiency of all qualifying measures for a period of no less than twenty (25) years from the date of installation. If the PV system is removed from Austin Energy service territory or disconnected from Austin Energy's grid within ten years of installation, the applicant will be subject to forfeiture of the incentives received (see section VIII).
- E. Customer must sign the Solar Incentive Customer Agreement Form.
- F.
- G. Property deed restrictions must not prohibit the installation of solar photovoltaics on property.
- H. Austin Energy guidelines and incentive levels are subject to change without prior notice, and Austin Energy may refuse any incentive application that does not meet all requirements.
- I. Customers who participate in the Solar Photovoltaic Incentive Program are not eligible for smart meter opt-out.

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## **VIII. Incentive Repayment**

- A.** Customer repayment to Austin Energy of the incentives related to the PV system will become due if the customer fails to meet ongoing program requirements or fails to ensure that the incented equipment is properly maintained and operated at an Austin Energy-metered address and interconnected to the grid. The refund amount is calculated as:  
(incentive received) x (10 – number of full years the PV system was operational) x 0.1

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