

Austin Energy Customer Guide:

Questions to Ask Solar Contractors



Thinking about adding solar panels to your home? Great choice! With Austin Energy, you can get a \$2,500 rebate if you use approved participating solar contractors and complete our free online education course. But before you take the leap, it's important to make sure you have all the info you need to make a smart decision.

Check out these key questions to ask your solar contractor:

1. Is your company part of the Austin Energy Solar Rebate Program?

Austin Energy FYI: You will only be eligible to receive an Austin Energy Solar Rebate if your installer is a [Participating Solar Contractor](#).

2. Can I see pictures of previous customers' installations?

Austin Energy FYI: You will want to see pictures of the panels, racking and equipment wall.

3. Can you provide references of local customers and their contact information?

Austin Energy FYI: It is good to get positive references from previous customers, better if they are local and willing to speak with you and share their experiences.

4. Will your company be installing the PV system, or do you use subcontractors?

Austin Energy FYI: Some companies use subcontractors to perform the installation. If they do, you will also want to get information about the subcontractor and their quality of work and customer satisfaction.

5. Have you evaluated my roof for structural integrity?

Austin Energy FYI: Your roof should be structurally sound and have at least 10 years of life left on the roofing system; otherwise, you might want to consider reroofing before the solar installation.

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6. Have you checked my roof for shade from trees or nearby buildings?

Austin Energy FYI: If your home has trees nearby or adjacent tall structures, they may block the sun, which will negatively affect the production of your PV system. Participating solar contractors are required to take necessary steps to evaluate the impacts of shade on the proposed system and provide annual production estimates that account for losses, shading, orientation, and tilt.

7. Have you evaluated the condition of my current electrical service and main electrical panel?

Austin Energy FYI: Contractors will be required to bring your electrical system up to code. This may require an additional expense for a panel upgrade. Contractors should evaluate your current service and inform you of any required upgrades upfront.

8. Does the system come with monitoring capability? Is that included in the price?

Austin Energy FYI: Most systems have monitoring capabilities that will inform you about their performance. Different products have different monitoring and reporting features that may or may not come at an additional cost.

9. Do you offer a guarantee on how much energy the system will produce? How does it work?

Austin Energy FYI: Production guarantees can protect you from performance issues.

10. What is the schedule of my solar payments? How will those payments change over time?

Austin Energy FYI: Make sure to understand if there is an 'escalator' and what the total cost will be OR last payment will be.

11. Who do I call if I have questions or concerns during the installation process? Who do I call if I have questions or concerns post-installation?

Austin Energy FYI: Make sure to also get a contingent contact if the company or product manufacturer ceases operations.