



# Austin Energy Solar Programs

## Contractor Handbook

To become and remain a participating contractor with Austin Energy's Solar Programs, a contractor must meet the registration requirements and follow the policies outlined in this handbook, the specific program guidelines, and the [Austin Energy Code of Conduct and Ethical Requirements](#).

### **I. Registration Requirements**

Eligibility is contingent upon the contractor meeting the following requirements:

- A. Be registered as a vendor with the City of Austin. For the current City of Austin vendor requirements, visit: [https://www.austintexas.gov/financeonline/vendor\\_connection/index.cfm](https://www.austintexas.gov/financeonline/vendor_connection/index.cfm)
- B. Have a licensed master electrician on staff
- C. Be licensed as an electrical contractor with Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR), <https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/>
- D. Be registered with the City of Austin as an electrical contractor, <http://www.austintexas.gov/page/contractor-and-trade-permits>
- E. Be in good standing with public consumer protection entities (e.g. Texas Attorney General's Office, TDLR, Better Business Bureau)
- F. Be insured, and provide a certificate listing the City of Austin as the certificate holder with an additional insured endorsement except for workers compensation, and a 30-day notice of cancellation, for the following insurance coverage:
  - i) Worker's Compensation and Employer's Liability Insurance
    - (1) \$100,000 bodily injury each accident
    - (2) \$500,000 bodily injury by disease policy limit
    - (3) \$100,000 bodily injury by disease each employee
    - (4) Commercial General Liability Insurance
    - (5) Minimum \$500,000, per occurrence, for coverages A: Bodily Injury & B: Property Damage
    - (6) Business Automobile Liability Insurance
    - (7) All owned, non-owned, and hired vehicles with a minimum combined single limit of \$500,000 per occurrence

- (8) Alternate acceptable automobile insurance limits are:
  - (a) \$250,000 bodily injury per person
  - (9) \$500,000 bodily injury per occurrence
  - (10) at least \$100,000 property damage liability per accident
- G. Have on file a completion certification of the most recent versions of the following online trainings:
  - a. [Solar Contractor Training: Required Program Documents](#)
  - b. [Austin Energy: Customer Data Privacy Training](#)
- H. Comply with the Better Builder Certification Standards. More information on Better Builder Compliance program can be found at: <https://www.betterbuildertx.org/en/our-standards/>.

## **II. Maintaining Active Installer Status**

Participation in Austin Energy’s Solar Programs is at the sole discretion of Austin Energy, in addition to adherence to the Code of Conduct and Ethical requirements, the items below constitute the minimum actions required to remain a member of the program:

- A. Contractor must ensure that all registration requirements are continually met and kept up to date in the contractor’s file with Austin Energy.
- B. Contractor must notify Austin Energy solar program administrators immediately of any changes in information affecting registration such as contact information, certifications, insurance coverage, etc.
- C. Contractor must renew Customer Data Privacy Training on an annual basis to maintain access to online rebating portal.
- D. If registration requirements are not maintained on file, the contractor’s status will revert to “pending” and no new applications may be submitted or approved.
- E. Contractor must send a representative to all mandatory Austin Energy solar contractor meetings.
- F. Mandatory General Contractor meetings are every third Thursday of April, July, and October at 9AM CST. Contractor will be notified by email of any changes or additions to the schedule.
- G. Contractor must complete at least one solar program project every six (6) months or notify the Austin Energy solar program by way of the program master email ([solar@Austinenergy.com](mailto:solar@Austinenergy.com)) that contractor remains active in the region and wishes to remain on the participating contractor list.

## **III. Installation Guidelines and Procedures, Interconnection, and Solar Programs**

- A. All installations must meet the requirements set forth in the corresponding program guidelines.
  - a. The latest adopted Guidelines and Procedures are posted on our [online rebating portal](#) under ‘Publications’ and [on our website](#) under ‘Documents’.
  - b. Failure to comply with program guidelines will result in corrective action. Special attention should be paid to the system (size, shading, etc.) and documentation

requirements, repeated violations will result in suspension or removal from the program.

- B. For all solar programs, it is prohibited to install before application has been received and approved by Austin Energy. Solar installations completed before application approval are subject to a 1-year contractor suspension for all solar programs.**
- C. All installations must meet the requirements in the latest Austin Energy Distribution Interconnection Guide and Design Criteria Manual posted online, here:  
<https://austinenergy.com/contractors/Construction-Renovation/Customer-Power-Production>
- D. Contractor is expected to communicate latest Austin Energy rates to mutual Customers, which can be found here: <https://austinenergy.com/ae/rates/>
- E. 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.
- F. Contractor must comply with all guidelines set forth in the [Austin Energy Code of Conduct and Ethical Requirements document](#).

#### **IV. Final Inspections**

In addition to permits and inspections required by the City of Austin, Austin Energy will perform interconnection inspections for all solar installations.

- A. Reasons for interconnection inspection failure include, but are not limited to:
  - a. No-show at inspection
  - b. Unauthorized or unqualified personnel at inspection
  - c. Inaccurate or incomplete paperwork
  - d. Incomplete work at the time of inspection
  - e. Non-compliance with City of Austin building, electrical, and plumbing codes
  - f. Non-compliance with Austin Energy Interconnection Guidelines
  - g. Non-compliance with Design Criteria Manual
  - h. Use of improper or ineligible materials
  - i. Installation of a system not in accordance with solar program guidelines, approved letter of intent, or other program requirements
- B. If a contractor's work fails more than 30% of interconnection inspections (for rebated or non-rebated projects) over any three-month period, Austin Energy may issue a warning or suspend a currently participating contractor or prohibit a prospective contractor from participating in the solar programs in accordance with these guidelines.

#### **V. Legal and Regulatory**

- A. Legal action or program disciplinary procedures may be initiated for violations including, but not limited to:
  - a. Any use of program funding other than that use which is authorized by the City of Austin

or Austin Energy

- b. Any fraudulent use of City of Austin or Austin Energy funds, including submitting fraudulent or misleading solar incentive applications
  - c. Any misrepresentation of the City of Austin or Austin Energy, or the solar programs in communications or advertisements directed to a customer or potential customer
- B. A participating contractor may be disqualified from the solar programs if a lawsuit is brought against the company related to its activities associated with the Austin Energy solar programs. When a participating contractor has been disqualified, previously authorized funding may be provided, but additional funding will not be approved. If the lawsuit is favorably concluded by settlement or judicial decree, the company is eligible to apply again to participate in programs.

## **VI. Program Violations and Removal**

- A. By registering with Austin Energy, contractor acknowledges and agrees that Austin Energy has sole discretion as to whether a customer or inspector complaint warrants contractor's suspension or permanent removal from the program.
- B. A participating contractor's violation of any program requirement laid out in this handbook, the Austin Energy Code of Conduct and Ethical Requirements, or any other action deemed by Austin Energy to put customers or the City of Austin at risk, including criminal acts, substance abuse, inappropriate language, customer harassment, or intentional or negligent injury to persons or damage to property, will result in disciplinary actions outlined in the Austin Energy Code of Conduct and Ethical Requirements.
- C. Contractor must remain in good standing with public consumer protection entities (e.g. Texas Attorney General's Office Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, Better Business Bureau, etc.) and must not have more than two substantiated customer or inspector complaints, as determined by Austin Energy. Contractors with two or more substantiated complaints (e.g. reports of program misrepresentation, fraudulent business practices, savings misrepresentation, non-responsiveness or poor workmanship) to consumer protection agencies or to Austin Energy are subject to warning, suspension, or removal from the program.
- D. A contractor that becomes inactive, or that was removed or suspended, must reapply to be re-instated into the program. A contractor, and its parent, subsidiaries, affiliates or assigns, that have been permanently removed from the program will not be considered for reinstatement. This also applies to specific employees within a given organization identified to have been complicit in violations resulting in the suspension or removal. Re-instatement is at the sole discretion of Austin Energy.