

# Solar Photovoltaic (PV) System Installation Steps

## 1. Energy Efficiency

Most homeowners would benefit from energy efficiency improvements. Austin Energy offers [incentives for energy efficiency improvements](#) for homes ten years old or older that will decrease utility bills while improving comfort in your home. By investing in energy efficiency you can reduce the amount of solar energy needed.

## 2. Estimate Your Solar Access

If your home is heavily shaded by surrounding trees, you may not be a good solar candidate. [Google Project Sunroof](#) is a good tool to estimate your solar savings potential, however is not available for all of the Austin Energy area.

## 3. Estimate Your Annual Consumption

In the upper-left corner of your Austin Energy bill you will see a graph showing your monthly electricity use (consumption). Under the graph you will see your “13 month average consumption”. Multiply that number by 12 to get your annual consumption.

## 4. Estimate The System Size That Will Provide 100% of The Energy You Consume.

Divide your annual consumption by 1450 kWh to get an estimate of the largest system size (kW-dc) you would need to meet your needs. A system that is bigger than this size might result in credits that you are unable to use.

## 5. Get at Least Three Proposals

Don't forget to use the *Helpful Questions for Solar Customer to Ask Contractors* document.

## 6. Compare Bids and Payment Methods

Don't forget to use the *Solar Bid Comparison Worksheet*.

## 7. Select a Contractor

Consider what is important to you, such as price, quality of the product, quality of installation, etc. If you are applying for an Austin Energy rebate, you must use an [Austin Energy Participating Contractor](#) to install your solar PV system.

## 8. Contracting

Read the contract carefully and make sure you fully understand the details.

## 9. Ask Questions During The Installation

Be curious, learn about the system, and watch for unexpected behavior. You can also check on the status of the [electrical permit](#).



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### 10. System Inspection

You may want to attend the final inspection of your system, but it is not required. You will need to ensure that the inspector and contractor have access to all system components.

### 11. Meter Installation and System Energization

Typically the meter will be installed within 1-2 weeks of passing the final solar inspection. The meter technician will not energize your system. Your contractor will either energize the system on your behalf or train you to energize and understand the safety aspects.

### 12. Set Up Monitoring And Sign Up For The Austin Energy App

Most systems will come with monitoring that will help you track production and identify performance issues, but this usually requires some set up.

The Austin Energy App is free tool that provides daily monitoring of your electric use and solar generation. You can even sign up to receive alerts when the system is not producing power for multiple days. Simply visit [www.austinenergyapp.com](http://www.austinenergyapp.com) and log on using the same username and password that you use to access your utility account at [www.COUtilities.com](http://www.COUtilities.com).

Contact your contractor if your system fails or starts to produce less than normal amounts of energy.

### 13. Keep Important Documents

If you have issues in the future you will want to have a file of the information regarding warranties, system components, and the design.

If you have any questions, please contact us at (512) 482-5346 or [conservation@austinenergy.com](mailto:conservation@austinenergy.com).

