

CUSTOMER-OWNED SOLAR BUYER'S CHECKLIST



Investing in solar is a big decision. Whether motivated by the environment, economic factors or other reasons, LES makes the process as simple as possible. Consider these facts and best practices to make an informed decision about your solar investment.

Property assessment

- Ensure your home/business is operating at maximum energy efficiency. Inspect the space to determine that windows and doors are adequately sealed, walls and attic have proper insulation and all appliances are running efficiently. Making these improvements first may reduce the size, and often cost, of the solar array you need to install. If your property has no wall insulation and/or minimal attic insulation, or you are planning to replace air conditioning, a heat pump or electric water heater, you may qualify for an [LES Sustainable Energy Program](#) incentive and [federal income tax credits](#).
- Evaluate your property for solar. Solar systems maximize energy production when unshaded, oriented to the south and tilted 20 to 40 degrees. Production is reduced by 20%-30% when faced east or west. Northerly, easterly and flat-oriented systems do **NOT** qualify for an LES incentive.
- Inspect your roof. Make sure it is in good condition with ample southerly, westerly and/or easterly space to support solar panels and racking system.

Key facts

Nominal (not adjusted for inflation) retail electric rates are projected to increase up to 1.5% annually over the next 30 years for the west north central region. ([Energy Information Administration's Annual Energy Outlook](#))

One kilowatt of optimally oriented and tilted solar (southerly facing, unshaded) should produce 1,400 to 1,500 kilowatt-hours annually. (PVWatts®)

An owner should budget at least \$20/kW annually for ongoing maintenance, inverter replacement, insurance and other expenses. (National Renewable Energy Laboratory)

For the safety of utility crews, PV solar systems are generally not designed to operate during power outages unless a utility-approved transition switch has been installed to prevent any parallel operations.

Financial considerations

Financial savings through solar are primarily achieved by reducing the amount of energy you will need to purchase from LES. The value of that energy is determined by the energy rate component of your bill. **Note that customer and facility charges will continue to be assessed no matter how much energy your system produces.** The fixed customer and facility charges recover costs to build and maintain infrastructure and customer account support to provide you highly reliable service.

- Start by reviewing your annual electric energy history to understand how much you would like to reduce through on-site generation. You can request a copy of your property's energy history report by contacting LES at 402.475.4211 or energyservices@LES.com.
- Consider getting multiple bids. A list of contractors eligible to provide LES solar incentives is available at LES.com/Solar.
- When reviewing solar proposals, verify the correct energy rate, fixed customer and facility charges, and a reasonable annual rate adjustment factor are being used to make value calculations. Verify current residential and business rates at LES.com/Rates. Contact LES at energyservices@LES.com or 402.475.4211 if you need assistance.
- Projected financial savings should be calculated based on the current energy rate and any potential reduction in your fixed customer and facility charges.

Next Steps

- Contact LES with any questions at energyservices@LES.com or 402.475.4211.
- Check participating contractor list at LES.com/Solar.
- Consider LES' [Virtual Net Metering](#) program if rooftop solar isn't right for you.

My signature acknowledges that I have read and understand the facts and best practices listed above.

Name _____ Date _____

Customer Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone Number _____ Email _____

Helpful Tips

Familiarize yourself with the [federal investment tax credit](#), [LES capacity payment](#) incentive and low interest financing offered by the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy's [Dollar and Savings Loan Program](#).

Check out the National Renewable Energy Laboratory's [PVWatts®](#) solar calculator to model energy production and associated savings with different size solar systems. Be sure to use the current [residential](#) or [commercial](#) energy rate to accurately reflect savings that will accrue from the solar system's annual production.

Learn about how net metering works by reviewing LES' [Customer-Owned Renewable Generation brochure](#).

Only sign a contract if you understand and are comfortable with the terms and conditions.