

## Are You Considering Solar?

We are all looking for ways to lower our electricity usage. You may have considered producing your own electricity by installing solar panels. Craighead Electric Cooperative Corporation (CECC) offers net metering to measure how much energy solar systems put back onto the grid, so it is certainly an option. Here are some questions to consider before you commit to installing a solar system.

### What is Net Metering?

In order to generate your own power (from any source) and put it on the grid, you must sign a net metering agreement. This is a contract between the Member and CECC that ensures power is produced safely and that you receive credit for it correctly. The first step to a net metering agreement is to submit a Preliminary Interconnection Site Review Request to CECC. This form can be found at [craigheadelectric.coop/net-metering](http://craigheadelectric.coop/net-metering). Remember, this must be done before any work can begin.

### What size system do I need?

CECC can help you determine what your power needs are based on your usage history. A larger number of solar panels will produce more power but will also be more expensive, so how many do you really need? The smart move would be to lower your power needs first so that fewer panels would be required. Before shelling out for a passel of panels, make sure that you have upgraded your older, less-efficient equipment, thoroughly insulated all conditioned spaces, upgraded to efficient lighting, etc. so that you will have less usage to offset and less equipment to buy.

### Can I sell power back to CECC?

Yes, to a point. In a net metering arrangement, power is exchanged kilowatt hour for a kilowatt hour. For example, if you use 500 kWh in a month but also produced 500 kWh, your “net” usage is 0. This is ideal for any net metering setup as you are getting full credit for the kilowatt-hours you generate. If you used 500 kWh in a month but produce 1000 kWh, the 500 extra kWhs will carry over to the next month so you still get full credit. However, if you continue to overproduce and bank more than \$100 worth of power,



your excess generated power is exchanged at the “avoided cost rate” which is significantly less than your normal kWh rate. This is why sizing your system correctly is so important. Size your system to just offset your average monthly usage in order to get the quickest return on your investment.

### Will my bill be zero?

While it is possible to achieve net zero usage, the monthly total on your bill can only go as low as the availability charge, plus tax. This is the fixed charge on your bill that goes towards covering the cost of maintaining the poles, lines, and equipment used to deliver electricity to our members.


### What happens during an outage?

Most solar panel systems are designed to stop generating if grid power is lost. This is done as a safety measure to keep power from back-feeding during an outage, keeping our linemen safe. More sophisticated solar systems have battery backup that can provide power during an outage, but these require advanced switching gear that swaps power from the grid to the batteries during an outage.

Do you have more questions about solar power? Find more information at [craigheadelectric.coop/renewable-energy](http://craigheadelectric.coop/renewable-energy) or call Craighead Electric Cooperative at 1-800-794-5012.



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