

Solar Photovoltaic Systems – What you need to know

GENERAL INFORMATION

Tell me about solar systems that produce electricity.

A solar photovoltaic (PV) system is a type of renewable generation system (RGS) where a consumer installs solar panels and related equipment that allow power to be harnessed from the sun to produce electric power for the home or business.

What is net metering?

The LCEC Net Metering program allows LCEC customers with a renewable generation system (RGS) to offset all or part of their energy use. To offset energy use, the output from the customer's RGS must be used downstream of the meter where it is connected.

Does Florida help me pay for my solar system?

Currently, there are no state incentives for installation of renewable generation systems (RGS).

Does LCEC offer any incentives for installing a solar system?

No. As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, LCEC does not offer rebates or incentives. All operating expenses are paid by customers through base rates. Incentives could potentially increase rates and would be subsidized by customers not receiving benefits of the system.

Can I sell my electricity to LCEC, and how can I do that?

Yes, you can sell the electricity to LCEC. Electricity not used when it is produced is sent to the grid as excess energy and is accumulated and accounted for in "reserves" to be drawn upon as needed to offset future energy use from LCEC. For billing cycle months January through November, any accumulated "reserves" will be carried forward for use in the following billing month. In the last billing cycle month of each calendar year (December), all "reserves" will be trued up and a check will be mailed to the customer. Note that the installed system cannot exceed 90 percent of the customer's utility distribution service rating at the customer's location.

My bill is high; the installer says I won't have to pay for electricity again or I will reduce my bill.

Output of your system is based on many variables, including but not limited to installed capacity, weather patterns, usage and habits. The most benefit will be seen during the fall and spring when temperatures are cooler, air-conditioning usage is lower and cloud cover is less.

MEASUREMENT AND RATES

Tell me about the rate. How will my rate change?

Customers are billed on the Net Metering rate in accordance with LCEC Rate Schedule Net Metering Rider. LCEC performs an annual rate comparison analysis that compares usage billed under the Net Metering rate for the prior calendar year to charges that the customer would have been billed under the standard retail rate if customer were not receiving the net metering service. For each month where retail charges would have been less, LCEC will provide credit to the customer. Based on results, the customer receives the benefit of the lower rate each month.

Tell me how much LCEC will pay me for the electricity I produce/sell.

Excess energy accrued is paid at the “as available rate” or wholesale rate. This rate varies from year to year and is less than the retail rate. At the end of 2013, the rate was \$0.04069/kWh and at the end of 2012, the rate was \$0.04169/kWh.

Will I need a different meter to sell LCEC electricity?

Yes, a bidirectional meter will be installed to measure electricity sold to LCEC, electricity sold to the customer, and the net electric energy flow.

The bidirectional meter measures power flows going into and out of your home or business. The bidirectional meter has three different readings: (1) delivered, (2) received, and (3) net. Delivered (DL) is the power flow going into the home; Received (RC) is the power flow coming out of the home; Net (NT) is the difference between Delivered (DL) and Received (RC).

Do I pay extra for a new meter to sell electricity to LCEC?

LCEC charges a non-refundable processing fee for interconnection of a renewable generation system (RGS). It is based on the capacity of the installed system. It will be billed to the customer’s account after the interconnection agreement is approved.

- Tier 1 (0-10kW) \$35
- Tier 2 (>10kW-100kW) up to \$750
- Tier 3 (>100kW-1mW) \$1,000+

I read how much electricity my system is generating; I am not reading the same numbers on your meter. Why?

For typical solar system installations, the reading you receive from your inverter is the total electric energy generated. Since your solar system is connected to your main service panel, any appliances or loads that are running concurrently will consume a portion or all of the total energy generated. Any energy not consumed by the appliances or loads is excess energy and will

be sold to LCEC. The bidirectional meter measures energy coming out of the home (DL), energy going into the home (RC) and the net energy flow (NT).

INSTALLATION

Can I install the system myself?

Yes. You are required to apply for a permit from the local government authority and an inspection is required.

Can you recommend or give me the name of a solar company for me to use?

LCEC recommends conducting research and gathering multiple quotes before making a decision. We do not endorse one installer, manufacturer or vendor over another.

Do I have to install the solar system on my roof?

No, you can have a “ground-mounted” system (if approved by the local government permitting authority).

How many solar panels will I need? How much do they cost?

A licensed contractor/installer can advise you on how many panels are needed to meet your home’s or facility’s needs. Systems installed on a typical home can vary depending on the system’s capacity.

If I have a system to heat the water for my pool, what do I need to do?

If the installation is not tied into the electric grid, no paperwork for LCEC is required.

Can I use wind power or install a windmill?

Check with your local government permitting agencies.

Do I have to install solar panels on my roof to produce electricity?

No, you can have a “ground-mounted” solar photovoltaic system, wind turbine or other renewable generation system (RGS).

I live in an apartment; can I install solar panels to reduce my electric bill?

Solar systems have to be approved and installed by the owner of the apartment building.

I don't want to connect my system to LCEC. Can I do that?

Yes. You can install a stand-alone renewable generation PV system that is not interconnected with LCEC.

REQUIREMENTS

Tell me what documentation I will need to participate in the program.

An application/compliance form and an interconnection agreement are required, along with supporting documentation and an inspection report. Forms and additional information are available on our website under Net Metering Program, [Interconnection Tiers](#).

Who will inspect my system?

Inspection of the system installation will be done by your local permitting official (City of Sanibel, City of Marco Island, City of Cape Coral, Collier County, Lee County, etc.). The installer will be required to apply for a permit.

Please change out my meter.

Once the required documents are received and approved by LCEC and an inspection report is received, the meter will be changed out.

How long does it take to change out my meter?

Once LCEC receives and approves the completed net metering application and interconnection agreement, LCEC will, within ten (10) business days, install the bidirectional meter and send written notice that parallel operation of the system may begin.