

Renewable Generation at Your Home or Business

Are you interested in generating power from solar, wind or another renewable energy source at your home or business? Learn more below.

I want to put renewable generation (solar panels, small wind-turbine, etc.) on my house or business. Does Idaho Power allow this?

Yes. There are three options for interconnecting renewable generation to Idaho Power's grid:

Option 1: Net Metering: Net Metering is the most common avenue for Idaho Power's customers to interconnect renewable generation to offset their own energy consumption. Idaho Power's Net Metering tariff allows customers to install small-scale renewable generation projects on their property and connect to Idaho Power's electrical grid.

Option 2: Schedule 86: Schedule 86 is available to generators who wish to receive financial payment for their production at market-based rates. Under Schedule 86, generation from installed renewable systems is separately metered, and sellers receive financial payment for each kilowatt-hour (kWh) of energy produced. The price paid per kWh is based on market prices recorded within the same month.

Option 3: Energy Sales Agreement: Generators who wish to sell electricity to Idaho Power under a long-term contract can procure an Energy Sales Agreement, or "ESA." Under the terms of an ESA, sellers are paid for each kWh of energy produced according to avoided-cost rates set by the Idaho Public Utilities Commission. In order to receive payment at avoided-cost rates, a generation unit is subject to strict performance requirements on a monthly basis. Due to the more stringent requirements, this option is not typically utilized by Idaho Power's residential or business customers.

Does Idaho Power offer any financial incentives or rebates for installing small-scale renewable energy systems on my property?

No. However, there are federal and state tax incentives and loan programs that can help with financing on-site renewable energy sources. The Idaho Office of Energy and Mineral Resources has information on financing options at oemr.idaho.gov. For Oregon customers, visit the Oregon Energy Department at oregon.gov/energy. The Database of State Incentives for Renewable Energy (*DSIRE*), funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, also lists incentives for renewable resources by state at dsireusa.org.

What is the cost of a small-scale renewable system?

The cost of a system depends on many factors including the type and size. To get an estimate, contact a local dealer familiar with the type of system you are interested in.

How much energy does a system generate?

Energy generated varies by project depending on such factors as technology, weather, location and orientation. Your dealer can help estimate potential generation from the different systems.

How much space do I need?

For a solar array, each kW of solar photovoltaic generation capacity requires about 100 to 200 square feet of roof or ground area depending on the efficiency of the panels.

For a wind turbine, the space depends on the type and height of the system installed. A general rule of thumb is the turbine generator should be 20 feet above the top of anything within 300 feet of the system. Turbines should be erected away from structures to minimize the risk of falling on buildings during strong winds. The minimum distance between turbines and structures is typically equal to the combined height of the tower and blades, known as the “fall distance.”

What other restrictions apply?

Check with your homeowners association and local planning and zoning commission to see if local ordinances or rules prohibit or limit the installation of renewable resources on your property. Also, ask your installer about other considerations you may encounter.

What size system should I get?

The size of the system depends on many factors including the type of technology, the available space and how much energy your home or business uses. Your monthly electric bill documents your usage over the past 12 months and can be accessed with MyAccount, Idaho Power’s online account portal. MyAccount is available at idahopower.com. For customers interested in solar, visit idahopower.com/solarpower for calculators to help estimate system size and costs.

Don’t forget to take advantage of Idaho Power’s energy efficiency programs to help lower your overall energy use. Information can be found at idahopower.com/save.

What is my first step?

Do your research. Visit idahopower.com/netmetering to find:

- Frequently asked questions and checklists
- Access to your energy use through MyAccount
- Applications and forms
- Links to online calculators

When you are ready to proceed, find an installer. Idaho Power recommends getting three bids.

How can I find an installer?

The Idaho Office of Energy and Mineral Resources posts a list of contractors that serve Idaho and Eastern Oregon. Visit oemr.idaho.gov for more information. Oregon customers, visit the Oregon Energy Department at oregon.gov/energy.

Once you’ve selected a system or to learn more about connecting to Idaho Power lines, visit idahopower.com/netmetering.

On-site generation is not an option for me. How can I still offset my use with renewable energy?

Idaho Power’s Green Power Program allows customers to match their use with renewable energy. For more information, visit idahopower.com/greenpower.