

Getting Started with Solar – Bemidji Solar Landing Page

This webpage contains information about solar energy in Bemidji. Bemidji is part of the SolSmart program, a national designation program through the Department of Energy. SolSmart is a national recognition program which encourages cities to make it faster, easier, and more affordable to grow solar energy.

About Solar Energy

Solar energy can be used to generate electricity, to provide hot water, and to heat, cool, and light buildings.

Minnesota is a great place for solar energy. Believe it or not, much of the Midwest has the same solar potential as Tallahassee, FL and Houston, TX! Through a combination of utility rebates and new technology, solar electricity continues to become more affordable and a more common part of our energy system.

Permitting Process

For solar systems in Bemidji, the following permit process is required:

- Contact the Planning & Zoning Office to check for property and setback requirements for your solar project.
- A Building Permit is required. Building permit applications are available at Bemidji City Hall.
- Electrical permits are granted through the State of MN. To apply for an electrical permit online, [Click here](#).
- Inspections occur through a State of Minnesota Inspector, more information can be found on the [state webpage](#)
 - Solar PV Inspection Checklist for Minnesota can be found at [this link](#)
- For more information on electrical permitting, contact our state inspectors: Wade Koons – 218-255-3011
- For grid tied systems your electric supplier will have requirements that will need to be followed. Some of these requirements are inspections by the electric supplier. For OtterTail Power Company interconnection process go to [this link](#). For Beltrami Electric Cooperative interconnection go to [this link](#).

Interested in your own solar energy system?

Wondering if a particular site in Minnesota is good for solar energy?

The [Minnesota Solar Suitability App](#) can help. This tool displays the solar potential of every spot in the state of Minnesota. With this data, and the services provided through this application, home and business owners can easily identify the solar potential of their property.

How can I find a solar developer?

Minnesota is home to many solar companies. The [Clean Energy Project Builder](#) is a great place to find an assortment of clean energy businesses including solar installers, community solar garden developers, energy auditors and more.

Wondering what questions to ask? Check out The American Solar Energy Society's list of [questions to ask potential renewable energy installers](#).

How can I find a community solar garden?

Community Solar Gardens are centrally-located solar photovoltaic (PV) systems that provide electricity to participating subscribers.

Members of other utilities in Minnesota can subscribe to a community solar garden if one is offered by their electric utility.

Beltrami Electric Cooperative has a solar garden that interested members can subscribe to. Follow [this link](#) to learn more.

Follow [this link](#) for great resources to learn more about if community solar is right for you.

What is Bemidji doing around solar energy?

Bemidji is participating in [SolSmart](#), a national program that provides free technical assistance with addressing local barriers to solar energy. Through this program, Bemidji is working to make it easier for residents and businesses to choose solar energy.

Is Financing Available for Solar Energy Projects?

Residents interested in installing photovoltaic solar panels (the kind that produce electricity) on their property can access financing through the Center for Energy and Environment. [Click here](#) for more information.

Businesses can finance solar energy projects through a tool called "Property-Assessed Clean Energy", or PACE, in which energy-saving measures are paid for through property taxes. This can work well even for businesses that rent their space. More information on PACE financing is available [here](#).

Interested in Employment in the Clean Energy Sector?

The [MN Clean Energy Job Board](#) is a tool that job seekers can use to find jobs in the energy efficiency and renewable energy fields, and that employers can use to post their latest openings.