



Illinois Net Metering: Systems installed pre-2025

FACT SHEET

July 2025

Important: This fact sheet is for people who installed solar panels before Jan. 1, 2025. If you installed or plan to install panels after that date, please refer to our post-2025 fact sheet.

If you own or operate a renewable electricity generator, such as rooftop solar panels, you may be able to receive a benefit called “net metering.” Residential and commercial customers of Commonwealth Edison (ComEd), Ameren Illinois and MidAmerican can participate in net metering.

What Is net metering?

Under net metering policy, if you generate your own electricity through solar panels, for example, you can get credits on the three main sections of your bill (supply, delivery and taxes/fees) for those times when you generate more power than you use. Your utility will only charge you for the net amount of electricity you consume, plus any other fixed delivery charges.

What types of systems qualify?

You must own or operate an on-site renewable electricity generator of up to 2,000 kilowatts (kW) that is used at your home or business. While residential rooftop solar is the most common application, net metering can apply to other forms of renewable electricity generators:

- Wind
- Dedicated crops grown for electricity generation
- Anaerobic digestion of livestock or food-processing waste
- Fuel cells or microturbines powered by renewable fuels
- Hydroelectric energy
- Solar energy (photovoltaic, or “PV”)

How much am I paid for excess power I generate?

Illinois net metering law requires investor-owned utilities (ComEd, Ameren, MidAmerican) to offer one-to-one net metering for renewable energy generation that is sized to offset the household’s energy usage. One-to-one net metering means that you will be credited for the electricity you send back to the grid at the same rate that you are charged for electricity. One kilowatt-hour sent to the grid offsets one kilowatt-hour used from the grid. This is the best type of net metering policy for consumers because it will lead to the highest level of savings.

In a given month, if you produce more electricity than you use, those excess net metering credits will rollover to the next month and can help offset future electricity usage. Any remaining credits will expire once per year, either in April or October, depending on which option you select. An

April expiration date is best for solar installations as it gives you the most time to use built up credits from the previous summer. An October expiration date is best for wind installations because wind turbines produce more in the winter than in the summer, and October gives you the most time to use built-up credits from the previous winter. (**Note:** Credits do not expire for customers enrolled in ComEd’s Hourly Pricing program. Read more below.)

Utilities do not require you to size your renewable generation systems to match your usage. But remember, unused net metering credits will expire at the end of your annual period, so it is still economical to have your renewable energy system match the electricity demand of your household.

If you are a customer of a municipal utility or electric cooperative, contact it to see if they have a net metering program. Illinois’ 2021 Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) requires all municipal utilities and co-ops to publish their net metering policies.

Can I lose my net metering benefit?

The benefit could be reduced for certain customers. Here’s an explanation:

People who installed panels before 2025 are considered “legacy” customers, and they receive net metering credits on all three parts of their bill: supply, delivery and taxes/fees. But, under a change in net metering policy that went into effect on Jan. 1, 2025, households installing solar panels after that date receive net metering credits on the supply section of their bill only.

The new policy also states that a legacy household could lose that status and only receive the net metering benefit on the supply section of the bill if that customer accepts a new Distributed Generation (DG) rebate being offered. (You can learn more about this rebate with your utility.) Also, legacy households should check with their utility before doing any system modifications, to be sure they won’t lose their legacy status

What is interconnection?

When you apply for net metering, you will also have to apply for interconnection, which is permission to connect your renewable generator to the electric utility’s grid. If you are installing a residential solar system, your solar installer will typically fill out both the net metering and interconnection applications on your behalf—but make sure to check with the installer to confirm. If you are installing a different type of renewable generator, ask the company you are working with if they will handle the interconnection and net metering applications.

How do interconnection and net metering change, depending on the size of my installation?

Net metering and interconnection both become more complicated if you are trying to install a large system—between 10 kilowatts (kW) and 2,000 kW. (The average residential solar installation in Illinois is about 7 kW.)

With larger systems, the utility may need to conduct a study to see if the electricity network in your area can accommodate the power your system is expected to export to the grid. For some large systems, they may determine that the grid cannot accommodate the new generation. In this case you would be required to pay for the grid upgrades necessary to accommodate your system's electricity generation.

If you are thinking of installing a larger renewable energy generator we recommend involving your utility company from the early planning stages, so that you are not surprised by any of the associated costs.

For more information on interconnecting larger systems see the [Administrative Code on Interconnection of Distributed Generation Facilities \(Title 83, Parts 466 and 467\)](#).

Can I participate in net metering if I'm with an alternative supplier?

Yes. Alternative suppliers are required to offer net metering and to provide credits at the same rate they are charging you for electricity. Alternative suppliers also are required to make contact information available specifically for net metering customers.

While they are required to comply, alternative suppliers do not always meet these requirements. It's often simpler to cancel with an alternative supplier and participate in net metering with your utility company. The utility companies have larger net metering departments than the suppliers, making it easier for them to address your questions.

For both ComEd and Ameren, net metering customers will no longer lose banked credits (that have rolled over from a previous month) when switching suppliers.

Can I participate in real time pricing and net metering?

Yes. ComEd and Ameren customers with rooftop solar installations can still participate in their utility's real time pricing program ("Hourly Pricing" for ComEd, "Power Smart Pricing" for Ameren), which charges participants a market rate that can change hourly. Such a program does not guarantee savings, but it can be beneficial if you can avoid heavy electricity usage during times of the day when prices are high. If you are on a real time pricing program, your net metering credits will reflect those hourly rates. Some other things you should know:

- Real time pricing is only recommended if you own your panels. If you are on a solar lease or Power Purchase Agreement (PPA), you will be charged a different

rate than what you received in net metering credits on your utility bill.

- For ComEd Hourly Pricing participants, excess net metering credits do not expire and are not zeroed out annually, as is the case for net metering customers on ComEd's traditional fixed-price supply rate. (With Ameren's Power Smart Pricing program, credits expire annually.)
- When switching from a fixed-price rate to ComEd's Hourly Pricing program, the net metering credit applied to your bill switches from a kilowatt-hour credit to a monetary credit (If a net metering customer decides to switch back to a fixed rate, their accumulated credits remain as monetary credit on future bills.)
- For Ameren customers, any switch from a fixed-price rate to Power Smart Pricing will result in a loss of all stored credits.

There's no guarantee real time pricing will help solar customers save money—it depends on your circumstances. One benefit: You can pull power from your panels on hot summer afternoons and avoid paying peak prices for electricity. Additionally, if you own an electric vehicle, you can charge your vehicle at night, when prices are typically lower, and your net metering credits will cover more of your car-charging expenses.

If you are interested, give real time pricing a try and check your monthly results (emailed to you every month) to make sure the program is saving you money.

How Do I Apply for Net Metering?

Typically, the installer you're working with will fill out the net metering application for you. We recommend confirming this with your installer. For more information, or to apply for net metering, contact your electric utility.

ComEd

Phone: 1-800-825-5436

E-mail: NetMetering@comed.com

[Download the ComEd application](#)

Ameren

E-mail: renewablesillinois@ameren.com

[Download the Ameren application](#)

MidAmerican (Private Generation)

Email: PrivateGeneration@midamerican.com

Telephone (Daytime): 1-877-815-0010

[Download the MidAmerican application](#)