



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Steuben County REMC's new Co-op Solar program will make it easier and more affordable than ever to participate in solar energy. Here are some of the questions we get most often.

CO-OP SOLAR AND HOW IT WORKS

What is Co-op Solar?

Co-op Solar is a new solar energy program from your local electric cooperative. Unlike individual rooftop solar systems, Co-op Solar is a “community solar” system—a larger system that allows many co-op members to get the benefits of solar energy.

How does Co-op Solar work?

The solar panels are directly connected to the same utility power grid that serves you today. You get the benefits of solar energy—without any onsite equipment or maintenance.

Where are the arrays located?

Currently, our arrays are located in Peru, Wanatah, and Danville, Indiana, as well as Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, and Paris, Illinois.

What happens when it's cloudy?

As with any solar array, cloudy weather means reduced solar production. But with Co-op Solar, you get the benefit of solar panels spread across three states—and a little bad weather over one array doesn't mean the sun's not shining on another. Plus, you're always connected to Steuben County REMC lines.

How much of the time do the solar panels work?

Unlike other sources of energy, solar power is intermittent, and does not produce (or is reduced) during nighttime hours, cloudy weather, or when temperatures are too hot. These factors, along with the seasonal angle of the sun hitting the arrays, determine how much solar output is produced. Given these variables, we expect our solar arrays to produce energy about 20% of the time. During the remaining 80%, we rely on other generation resources and the full infrastructure of lines, poles, and the electrical grid to supply power to homes and businesses.

How does the solar energy get from the array to my home?

When solar energy is added to the power grid, that electricity becomes indistinguishable from energy produced by other sources. The electrons that enter your home may be produced by solar, wind, landfill gas, natural gas, or other sources of generation. But as more solar power is added to the grid, we can lessen our reliance on fossil fuels. And Steuben County REMC ensures that Co-op Solar dollars directly support solar generation.

How will it help the environment?

Generating energy with solar power creates no pollution or CO2 emissions, which is great for the environment. Solar power is a clean, renewable, and sustainable source of energy. And as solar power is adopted by more and more people, those benefits will really show. When you sign up for Co-op Solar, you don't just help preserve our environment the way it is—you help restore it to how it used to be.

Why did Steuben County REMC join with others to provide solar power? Why not do it alone?

By joining up with Wabash Valley Power and other electric co-ops, we are able to leverage significant savings and increase our buying power. And since we're a not-for-profit, we pass those cost-savings directly to our membership. It also makes it possible for more members to participate in a Co-op Solar program, since it's offered at a lower cost.

Why shouldn't I consider rooftop solar?

Maybe you should. But rooftop solar's not right for everyone. Many homes just aren't in a good location for rooftop solar. And if you're a renter, you're out of luck. Co-op Solar is for everyone. If you're a member of Steuben County REMC, you can put the power of the sun to work for you.

P.S.: No matter whether you're thinking about rooftop panels or Co-op Solar, an Energy Advisor from Steuben County REMC can help you better understand both options and choose what is right for you—and show you ways to save energy and money.

WHAT YOU GET

What am I signing up for?

When you participate in Co-op Solar, you are signing up for a subscription that provides you with the benefits of green energy produced from a portion of our total 1.7 MW solar program. We call each of these subscription units a block.*

Isn't solar energy free?

No. Unlike fossil fuels, the source of the energy is free. But, like every other fuel source, solar involves the cost of the solar panels to gather the energy and convert it into electricity—and all the costs of getting that power to you. Those costs will be figured into the total price you'll pay for Co-op Solar energy.

How much does solar cost?

The solar blocks are available for 44 cents per block each month.

How much energy does a block of solar power represent?

Now we're in the nitty-gritty! Each block corresponds to a portion of our solar array that should produce within a range of about 100 – 500 kWh per year, depending on the weather. Talk to your local co-op to learn more about what that means for your home's particular energy usage.

How much electricity does it take to power typical household appliances?

According to energy.gov:

- A 1000-watt coffeemaker used for one hour each day 365 days per year uses 365 kWh per year (less than a block of Co-op Solar).
- A clothes dryer used once a week for four hours uses 580 kWh per year (slightly more than a block of Co-op Solar).
- A 26-cubic-foot refrigerator uses approximately 725 kWh per year (about 1.4 blocks of Co-op Solar).

If I sign up for one block to start, can I still add more in the future?

Absolutely! We can advise you on how many blocks are available.

Do I have to buy any equipment?

Not at all. There's no equipment to purchase or maintain, and nothing to install. Since we own the solar arrays, we're responsible for taking care of them.

So who owns the solar arrays?

The arrays are actually owned by Wabash Valley Power, of which Steuben County REMC is a member. Wabash Valley Power is a co-op, too, and provides wholesale power to 23 co-ops (including ours) across Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri.

Is the Co-op Solar program a good investment?

Participating in Co-op Solar is a great way to reduce the environmental impact of your electricity usage, support your community, and manage the cost of electricity you consume. However, it is not intended to be an investment, and you should not subscribe for the purpose of earning profits.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Who is eligible to participate?

To be eligible, you must be a member of our local electric cooperative.

Do I need to own a home to participate?

Nope! The great thing about the Co-op Solar program is that you can get solar energy even if you're renting.

How do I sign up for solar?

You can request more information at PowerMoves.com/solar. You can also visit us on our website at www.remcsteuben.com, or you can call us at 260-665-3563.

*DISCLAIMER. The purchase of a Co-op Solar block by the consumer does not represent the purchase of any ownership interest, right, or title in or to any portion of the property and assets comprising the Solar Projects (whether tangible, intangible, real, or personal) or constitute any type of securities related to such Solar Projects. All rights, title, and interest in the Solar Projects are owned by Wabash Valley Power Association, Inc.