

# Solar Payment Option FAQ

---

## **Q. What is the Solar Payment Option?**

The Solar Payment Option is a pilot program designed to encourage the development of new solar photovoltaic projects by requiring participating Oregon utilities to purchase the energy produced by eligible systems enrolled in the program at a premium price.

## **Q. How did this program start?**

The 2009 Oregon legislature passed House Bill 3039 and in 2010 the Oregon legislature passed House Bill 3690, which required participating utilities to establish a volumetric incentive rate program — often referred to as a Feed-in Tariff — to encourage new solar photovoltaic projects. PGE created the Solar Payment Option to implement that legislation.

## **Q. What is the difference between the PGE Solar Payment Option and the PGE Net Metering program?**

The Solar Payment Option is an alternative to the PGE Net Metering program. In the Net Metering program, a customer is directly offsetting their own energy use by generating some of their own power. Instead of receiving kilowatt-hour credits like Net Metering customers, Solar Payment Option participants receive premium payments from PGE for the energy generated by their eligible solar installations. Unlike Net Metering, participants in the Solar Payment Option do not qualify for Energy Trust of Oregon incentives or Oregon solar energy tax credits. Participants in Net Metering and the Solar Payment Option are both eligible for federal tax credits and incentives. PGE receives Renewable Energy Credits for the energy generated by Solar Payment Option customers.

## **Q. Who is eligible to participate in the Solar Payment Option?**

To participate in the Solar Payment Option, you must be a PGE customer and receive electric service from PGE at the property where you wish to install the solar photovoltaic generation system. You must be installing a new photovoltaic system comprised of entirely new components that have not previously been enrolled in any other PGE customer-generator program (Net Metering or the Small Power Production – Qualifying Facility).

## **Q. Can I be enrolled in both Net Metering and the Solar Payment Option at the same time?**

Yes, but to participate in both programs, you must have two distinctly separate solar photovoltaic systems. Each must be tied to a unique PGE account that does not have another generation system feeding it.

# Solar Payment Option FAQ

---

## Q. Can any PGE customer participate?

Yes, if capacity is available in one of the categories during an enrollment window. There are three program categories based on size: small (<10 kW), medium (>10 to <100 kW), and large (>100 to <500 kW). Each size category has a certain amount of capacity allocated to it during each semi-annual enrollment window.

## Q. What are the rates for Solar Payment Option program participants?

The Oregon Public Utility Commission sets rates for each enrollment period; current rates are posted on the PGE website.

## Q. How can I participate in the Solar Payment Option Program?

If you are interested in participating, begin by contacting an Energy Trust of Oregon trade ally solar installer. The contractor you choose will conduct an onsite evaluation to determine the project's solar generation potential. If your site is suitable for Solar Payment Option Program, you are responsible for arranging the installation. An ETO trade ally installer can guide you through the process, including completing the necessary applications and agreements with PGE.

## Q. When can I apply for capacity?

Capacity is distributed on a semi-annual basis with enrollment windows opening at 8 a.m. PDT on the first business day of both April and October. Proposals for the competitive bid option portion of the program are due by 5 p.m. on the first business day of either April or October.

## Q. How is capacity distributed?

- **Small-scale (<10 kW):** In both the April and October enrollment windows, capacity in the small-scale system category is allocated first through a lottery-based application process and then through a first-come, first-served process. Each semi-annual enrollment window for small-scale systems lasts for three months.
- **Medium-scale (<10 to >100 kW):** Capacity for the medium-scale system category is distributed through two different enrollment methods that rotate with each enrollment window (April and October). In the April enrollment window, capacity is distributed in the same way as the small-scale system category (see above). Capacity made available for the medium-scale system category in the October enrollment window is distributed through a bid-option Request for Proposal process. Bid price is the sole factor in awarding bids.
- **Large-scale (<100 to >500 kW):** Capacity for the large-scale system category is available only in the April enrollment window and is distributed using a bid-option Request for Proposal process. Bid price is the sole factor in awarding bids.

# Solar Payment Option FAQ

---

## **Q. What is Market-Based Rate Authority?**

Projects selected using large- and medium-scale bid-option enrollment methods must certify they are eligible to make wholesale sales of energy at market-based rates, according to Oregon Administrative Rules. This authority is granted by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Facilities are not eligible to participate in the bid-option portion of the Solar Payment Option.

## **Q. How do I apply for capacity in the Solar Payment Option Program?**

Projects wishing to secure capacity in the program categories that use the lottery-based enrollment window must apply online at [PGEsolarprogram.com](http://PGEsolarprogram.com) for the standard option or complete a RFP for the program's competitive bid option. The application will become available at 8 a.m. PDT on the first business day in both April and October.

## **Q. What will I need to apply?**

You will need the following information for your online application:

- Name
- Phone number
- Email Address
- PGE account number
- Meter number
- Address of the proposed solar installation
- Anticipated date your system will go online
- Nameplate capacity of the proposed system in kW DC
- County where installation would take place
- System Installer information (must be an Energy Trust trade ally): Company name, contact person, phone number and email address

## **Q. What if more than one application is submitted for a project?**

Duplicate applications for the same site may result in all applications for that site being disallowed. Solar contractors and customers need to coordinate and submit only one application.

## **Q. How much does it cost?**

If your project is selected for the Solar Payment Option program through the lottery/first-come, first-served enrollment method, a deposit of \$500 or \$20/per kW DC nameplate capacity, whichever is greater, will be required. Visa, Mastercard, Discover and Paypal are accepted.

# Solar Payment Option FAQ

---

**Q. What are my next steps if I am successful in securing capacity in the program?**

To remain eligible for the Solar Payment Option Program, you must submit an Interconnection Application within two months and have your system fully installed and pass a final electrical inspection within 12 months of being awarded capacity.

**Q. How can I reach the PGE Solar Payment Option program?**

Call 503-464-8200 or email us at [solar@pgn.com](mailto:solar@pgn.com).