

Considering Renewable Energy?

Is solar or renewable energy generation really worth it? A payback period (Return-on-investment) is the amount of time it takes for you to earn back your initial investment. Renewables can help you save enough money on your energy bills over time to offset the upfront costs. How much you save per month depends on the size of your renewable system, your home's energy consumption and utility rates. Currently, CCED electric rates are still some of the lowest in the country. Be cautious of any salesperson promising any return-on-investment. Be sure they are using CCED rates in their calculations. Calculating the payback period will be unique to your circumstances due to the variability of the upfront costs, as well as the difference in energy costs based on your actual rates and rates in other regions. With federal tax incentives, Renewable energy can be a great alternative for those simply wanting to reduce their carbon footprint or reduce their monthly electric usage.

Basic steps to installing renewable energy

1. **Interconnection Application** – An application for renewable energy can be found at <https://columbiacity.net/>. This will need to be completed in full and a **\$175 application** fee paid before beginning any renewable installation. This application can be emailed (info@columbiacity.net) or turned in to the Columbia City Utilities office, 112 S Chauncey St, Columbia City, IN 46725.
2. **Interconnection Agreement**- After the application for interconnection is accepted and approved by the utility, an Interconnection Agreement, also found at <https://columbiacity.net/>, can be completed and submitted for approval.
3. **Installation**- Approval to move forward with installation of a renewable energy source will be granted by the utility after completing the steps above. After receiving such approval, it is the responsibility of the installation contractor to follow the one-line diagram provided to the utility.
4. **Inspection**- When installation is complete. The utility will have a third-party engineering firm inspect the installation, **at the property owner's expense**. This ensures the safety of both the Utility equipment and staff working on the lines, also serves to protect homeowner's property/equipment. Provided the installation passes the engineer's inspection, the owner is authorized to operate at full capacity. At this point the customer will transition their billing into a Renewable Energy Customer and will be charged the additional \$35/mo customer charge.

Think you may put surplus energy back onto the grid?

Currently, the Columbia City Electric Department is not able to purchase or Net-Meter renewable energy. All excess generation can be sold to our electric provider the Indiana Municipal Power Agency (IMPA). However, customers who choose to install and own a renewable generation facility should still first contact the CCED. You will need to submit the application and work with your local utility's interconnection process. Customers will also need to complete a power purchase agreement with IMPA that will document how IMPA will pay for the excess generation, as well as supply a one-line diagram and proof of ownership. IMPA customer generation information can be found at <https://www.impa.com/customergeneration>