

## Selecting a Solar Installer



### GETTING STARTED:



1. The North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) maintains an approved list of trained and certified solar installers. Check out the list on their locator map at this link: [nabcep.org/installer-locator](http://nabcep.org/installer-locator).

Proud member of



2. A number of installers are also members of the MREA, and may have participated or even taught courses for MREA. Visit the MREA Business Directory at: [midwestrenew.org/business-member-directory](http://midwestrenew.org/business-member-directory).



3. Focus on Energy maintains a searchable database of their Trade Allies. These are contractors and service providers who partner with Focus to deliver energy efficiency and renewable energy products and expertise to WI residents and businesses. Learn more at: [focusonenergy.com/trade-ally/find](http://focusonenergy.com/trade-ally/find).

**CHECK FOR CERTIFICATIONS:** National certifications show an advanced level of knowledge for solar installers such as:

- **NABCEP Certified:** This national certification requires coursework through accredited training programs, designing & installing a specified number of solar installs, & passing a professional technical exam.
- **UL Photovoltaic (PV) System Installation Certification:** Installers receive the PV System Installer Certification by passing an exam that is intended to measure the necessary competencies, safety training, & several years of hands-on experience in the field.
- **Electronics Technicians Association Photovoltaic Installer Certification:** This certification involves an in-depth program with apprenticeship & exam requirements.

### SEE MORE SOLAR RESOURCES AT:

[midwestrenew.org/community-resources](http://midwestrenew.org/community-resources)

— FLIP FOR MORE —

## QUESTIONS TO ASK:

Asking good questions before committing to buy a solar PV system helps protect you from potential hazards and liabilities associated with having the system installed on your building, business, or home. Whether you're installing on your home, or developing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for your business, we recommend asking the following questions, at minimum, prior to committing to buying a solar PV system. Be sure to also require that no work begin until the permit is on site and all documentation has been delivered and reviewed. If prepayment is requested, hold the final amount until all expectations have been met.

- **What qualifications do you or your employees have that ensures a quality install?**  
Nationally recognized installer certification (i.e. NABCEP, UL, ...) / Prior documented experience with system(s) desired / Contracting License, Liability Insurance
- **What is expected output & who is responsible if expectations are not met?**  
Output predictions based on site conditions & statement regarding liability
- **Does your company hold an Electrical Contracting License or do you hire out?**  
Provide name of licensee and type of license
- **What is the warranty (performance and/or workmanship) period of this install?**  
Product warranty information & construction & statement regarding liability
- **Who is responsible for the Interconnection and Incentive documents for this system?**  
Name of staff person who will prepare these and other incentive paperwork
- **For a Solar Electric System, what is the cost per watt on this proposal?**  
You may wish to compare cost per watt between two or more quotes from installers
- **Will installing this system void any roof warranties associated with my building?**  
List of precautions taken, products used and statements from manufacturer's compliance with roofing standards

## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Can you provide references from previous customers with similar systems?
- When will you be able to perform the work? How long will it take to finish?
- What previous installation experience do you have working with local officials & utilities?
- Do you repair systems that you installed, and if so, what are your rates?
- What kind of training are you willing to provide me (i.e. O&M, energy education, ...)?

**COMPARE COST ESTIMATES:** It is always best to get more than one installation estimate. A good estimate should include the cost of hardware, shipping, installation, connection to the utility grid, travel, & sales tax. It could even go so far as to include modeling of your PV system's production, expected payback, & total system benefits. As is true for many things, remember that the lower price may not always be the best price.



The Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational organization. Founded in 1990, the MREA promotes renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable living through education and demonstration. To learn more, call 715-592-6595 or visit [www.midwestrenew.org](http://www.midwestrenew.org).