

Applications open Jan. 1 for 2017 Made in Minnesota Solar Incentive Program;

Applications for the fourth year of the Made in Minnesota Solar Incentive Program will be accepted beginning on Jan. 1, 2017, and ending Feb. 28, 2017. The 10-year, \$150-million program helps fund new solar electric and solar thermal systems for Minnesota residents, businesses, and communities. The program is administered by the Minnesota Department of Commerce.

In its first three years, the Made in Minnesota solar initiative has catalyzed the state's rooftop solar market and helped put Minnesota on track to meet its renewable electricity and solar electricity goals. The program has boosted Minnesota's clean energy economy, making solar more affordable for homeowners and businesses, helping to create more clean energy jobs and diversifying the state's renewable energy portfolio.

Applicants of Made in Minnesota solar electric, or photovoltaic (PV), systems who are randomly selected for the program will receive an annual incentive payment for 10 years based on the system's electricity production. For owners of solar thermal systems, the program offers a one-time rebate up to 25 percent of the installed cost. Solar electric systems generate electricity for a home or building, while solar thermal systems provide supplemental space heating or water heating.

Program boosts state's solar industry

During the first three years of the program, funding was awarded for 1,048 solar electric projects and 36 solar thermal installations. The PV projects equal about 15 megawatts (MW) of electric capacity. When all installations are completed and generating power, they will generate enough electricity to power 1,856 average Minnesota homes. In 2014, funding was awarded for 267 solar PV projects and 15 solar thermal installations. In 2015, the program funded 354 solar PV projects and 11 solar thermal installations. In 2016, it supported 424 solar PV projects and 10 solar thermal projects.

Over 10 years, the program is expected to help fund 3,500–4,000 solar installations and increase Minnesota's solar electric capacity by about 65 MW, more than a four-fold increase in the state's capacity when the program began on Jan. 1, 2014.

Who can apply for Made in Minnesota solar incentives?

The solar incentive program is available to Minnesotans who install solar PV or solar thermal systems using solar modules or collectors certified as manufactured in Minnesota. Applications for the two parts of the incentive program—the Solar PV Production-Based Incentive Program and the Solar Thermal Rebate Program—will be accepted from Jan. 1 to Feb. 28 each year through 2023 and will be awarded through a random selection process. The solar PV incentive program is open to customers of investor-owned utilities (IOU) only (Xcel Energy, Minnesota Power, and Otter Tail Power). In addition, the solar PV incentive is available to developers of community solar gardens (less than 40 kW).

Solar thermal rebate applications are open to utility customers throughout the state, with priority given to IOU customers. After all IOU customer solar thermal rebate applications received during the January-February application period have been funded, applications from all utility customers in the state are reviewed and approved on a first-come, first-served basis until the \$250,000 annual allocation of solar thermal funds have been committed.

There will be several changes to the application process for 2017. These changes include;

- A signed installation agreement will be required to be uploaded at the time of application submittal.
- Only one application per parcel will be allowed to be submitted each year. A parcel is defined as a single parcel of real estate owned by a single person, group or entity that is defined by a boundary map maintained at the county level.
- A parcel map of the installation location will be required to be uploaded.
- A customer disclosure form will be required to be signed and uploaded. The customer disclosure form will be available for download from the front page of the PowerClerk [application page](#) as well as the [Commerce website](#).
- The reservation confirmation step will be eliminated. Customers will receive a funding confirmation letter in April and have until Dec. 31 to install the project.
- Extension requests will continue to be required prior to Nov. 1, and extensions will be granted through Dec. 31 of the following year.
- Projects will only be able to change modules if the approved and new modules are made by the same manufacturer and the new module is certified in the same program year.

More information on the Made in Minnesota program, including incentive amounts for the solar PV program and rebate amounts for the solar thermal program, is available on the [Commerce website](#). Questions can be directed to the Department of Commerce Energy Information Center at energy.info@state.mn.us or 651-539-1886 or 800-657-3710.