

# What to Know About the Illinois Net Metering Transition

Net Metering isn't going away – but it is changing. As the Illinois solar market matures, the state transitions from Net Metering to Smart Solar Billing.

**The deadline to be on Net Metering is 5:00 PM CT on December 31, 2024!**

## What You Need to Know

- There is no change for legacy customers
- You can still be eligible for upfront cost savings through the currently available DG Rebate and/or Storage Rebate, which can be combined with other financial incentives
- Solar can still provide you with long-term financial value by reducing monthly electric bills<sup>1</sup>

## Legacy Customers

If you are a current customer, you will qualify as a “Legacy” customer and will continue to receive the same Full Retail Net Metering benefits throughout the lifetime of your system.

New solar customers may still be able to qualify as Legacy customers. To qualify, your installer must submit the below information to your utility before 5:00 PM CT on December 31, 2024.<sup>2</sup>

| ComEd Customers   | Ameren Customers   |
|---|--|
| <p>Application for Net Metering</p> <p>Certificate of Completion application, which includes the below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A close up photo clearly showing the nameplate with the model and serial number of the inverter</li> <li>• Signed and approved inspection form (if required by the local authority). If no inspection form is required by the local authority, then an itemized invoice or receipt including the inverter model/serial number and address of installation is required</li> <li>• If microinverters are installed, then include a single file listing all of the serial numbers</li> <li>• If a storage system is installed, then include a photo of the battery nameplate</li> </ul> | <p>Application for Net Metering</p> <p>Witness Test Request application</p> <p>Certificate of Completion application, which includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Photos of the required signage and placarding</li> <li>• Proof of insurance</li> <li>• Installer certification</li> <li>• Signed and approved inspection from the local authority having jurisdiction (where applicable)</li> </ul> |

## Upfront Rebates Available

The **DG Rebate** will provide solar customers with a one-time rebate of \$300 per kilowatt of generating capacity. For example, if your system is a 10-kilowatt system, then you will receive a \$3,000 rebate.

The **Storage Rebate** functions similarly, but is specific to battery storage. As a solar customer who also installs storage, you will receive an additional one-time rebate of \$300 per kilowatt hour of storage to help reduce the cost of battery storage and provide your home with more energy resilience.

These rebates can be combined with other federal and state incentives to offset the cost to install solar.



## Still have questions?

Scan or visit  
[SolarPowersIllinois.com](http://SolarPowersIllinois.com)  
 for more information!

<sup>1</sup>Savings on monthly power bills will vary from customer to customer based on their unique solar system installation and behavior and use. It is recommended that you speak with a local installer to understand how solar will benefit your unique situation.

<sup>2</sup>Due to record levels of homeowners installing solar, lengthy permitting processes, and other potential delays, it is not guaranteed that you will qualify for Net Metering even if your installation has already been ordered. Please check with your installer for an estimated timeline of completion. Even if the submission deadline is met, Ameren and ComEd still reserve the right to reject a submission for projects the utility deems incomplete or for submissions that are determined to have missing or inaccurate information.

**Disclaimer:** The information provided is not and should not be considered legal advice.



# Net Metering Transition

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is Changing?

As of January 1, 2025, Illinois will sunset Net Metering and it will transition to “Smart Solar Billing.”

### What is Net Metering?

Net Metering is a billing practice that provides customers with photovoltaic systems with credits for excess electricity they generate and feed back into the grid. So, when a renewable energy system generates more electricity than the customer consumes, the surplus energy is sent to the utility grid and a credit is provided to the customer. Conversely, when a renewable energy system is producing less power than the customer consumes, the customer draws electricity from the grid and credits accumulated from the surplus generation will offset the cost of this electricity.

At the end of the billing cycle, the utility bill reflects the net amount of electricity consumed, thus the name, Net Metering.

### What is Smart Solar Billing?

Smart Solar Billing is the new billing practice that Illinois will deploy as of January 1, 2025. Smart Solar Billing is the successor billing structure to the current Full Retail Net Metering structure. Smart Solar Billing provides customers with lower monthly savings on their electric bills.

To offset the initial cost to install solar and/or storage, customers can apply for a one-time “Distributed Generation (DG) Rebate” (also called the “Smart Inverter Rebate”) and/or the “Storage Rebate.” The DG Rebate offers an incentive of \$300 per kilowatt of generating capacity and the Storage Rebate offers an incentive of \$300 per kilowatt hour of storage. More detail on these rebates is provided further down in the FAQs.

### Is Net Metering Going Away?

**No.** Current solar customers will be considered “Legacy” customers and will continue to receive the same Full Retail Net Metering benefits they always have throughout the lifetime of their solar panel system.

In order to be considered a legacy customer, the customer must have all required documentation submitted to their utility by 5:00 PM Central Time on December 31, 2024. The required information includes a Certificate of Completion application, a Witness Test Request application (for Ameren Illinois customers only), a Net Metering application, and supporting materials.

### When is the Net Metering Deadline?

The deadline is 5:00 PM Central Time on December 31, 2024. All new customers after this deadline will automatically begin on Smart Solar Billing.

### What is Required to Meet the Deadline?

In order to meet the deadline and receive the current Full Retail Net Metering benefits, a customer must have a Certificate of Completion application, a Witness Test Request application, a Net Metering application, and all associated supporting materials submitted to the customer’s utility before 5:00 PM Central Time on December 31, 2024.

It is not necessary to receive utility approval by the deadline. The materials must only be submitted by the deadline.

However, even if the submission deadline is met, Ameren and ComEd still reserve the right to reject a submission for projects the utility deems incomplete or for submissions that are determined to have missing or inaccurate information.

Your installer will understand this process well and know how to lead it on your behalf. It is highly recommended that you discuss the process with your installer.



### What is a Certificate of Completion?

The Certificate of Completion is the official legal document that verifies the quality, safety, and regulatory compliance of a solar panel installation. It will need to be signed by the utility company providing the owner of the system, as well as the installation company, permission to operate. This is the last step before the new system can be energized (turned on).

The solar installer will complete the Certificate of Completion and submit it to the utility, along with other paperwork, and after the installation is complete and all work has been finalized, the utility will complete the Certificate of Completion and energize the system to start generating electricity.

### What is a Witness Test?

Much like a Certificate of Completion, a Witness Test is a final inspection of a solar panel installation by a utility company to ensure that it is installed properly and functions safely. It also confirms that the system was engineered correctly and matches the approved design. A Witness Test is only required for Ameren Illinois customers.

### How Do I Submit a Certificate of Completion and/or Witness Testing?

Your installation company will be in charge of completing and submitting a Certificate of Completion and a Witness Test (unique to Ameren Illinois customers) upon the completion of your solar panel and/or storage installation. Please be sure to contact your installation company to discuss the status of your Certificate of Completion and Witness Test.

### What Documentation Does a ComEd Customer Need to Meet the Net Metering Deadline?

A ComEd customer will need the below materials submitted to their utility by 5:00 PM Central Time on December 31, 2024:

- Application for Net Metering
- Certificate of Completion application, which includes the below:
  - A close up photo clearly showing the nameplate with the model and serial number of the inverter
  - Signed and approved inspection form (if required by the local authority). If no inspection form is required by the local authority, then an itemized invoice or receipt including the inverter model/serial number and address of installation is required
  - If microinverters are installed, then include a single file listing all of the serial numbers
  - If a storage system is installed, then include a photo of the battery nameplate

### What Documentation Does an Ameren Customer Need to Meet the Net Metering Deadline?

An Ameren customer will need the below materials submitted to their utility by 5:00 PM Central Time on December 31, 2024:

- Application for Net Metering
- Witness Test Request application
- Certificate of Completion application, which includes the below:
  - Photos of the required signage and placarding
  - Proof of insurance
  - Installer certification
  - Signed and approved inspection from the local authority having jurisdiction (where applicable)

### Will I Be Required to Submit Anything to My Utility to Qualify For Net Metering?

Your solar installer will be responsible for leading the gathering, completion, and submission of the required materials. While you will likely be asked questions to ensure the documents are completed accurately, your installation company is well-versed and experienced with this process and will submit the completed documents on your behalf.

While your solar installer will do everything in their power, it is possible that you may not be able to meet the deadline due to factors outside of your installer's and your control, such as record levels of demand for going solar as well as potential delays innate with the permitting process. Additionally, even if the submission deadline is met, Ameren and ComEd still reserve the right to reject a submission for projects the utility deems incomplete or for submissions that are determined to have missing or inaccurate information.





### Is it Still Worth Installing a Solar Panel System?

**YES!** Installing a solar panel system can still provide financial benefits through rebates and monthly electric bill savings. Plus, you will be reducing your carbon footprint and contributing to a healthier environment for you, your family, and your community.

Additionally, if you also install battery storage, you will increase your energy resilience, further increasing the likelihood that you will avoid power blackouts even during the most severe weather. With battery storage, you will also be able to join a future Virtual Power Plant (VPP) program, which Illinois is currently exploring. Participation in a VPP program can provide additional incentives to owners of solar plus storage for supporting the grid during critical times.

### Will Smart Solar Billing Still Provide Me with Financial Savings?

New solar customers who begin on Smart Solar Billing will still have access to financial rebates, such as the one-time use DG Rebate and the Storage Rebate, and can receive savings on monthly electric bills\*. This will help offset the initial cost to install a solar panel system while still providing some monthly savings on your power bills.

The currently available one-time use rebates are the “Distributed Generation (DG) Rebate” (also called the “Smart Inverter Rebate”), and the “Storage Rebate.”

The DG Rebate will provide solar customers with a one-time rebate of \$300 per kilowatt of generating capacity. For example, if your system is a 10-kilowatt system, then you will receive a \$3,000 rebate.

The currently available Storage Rebate functions similarly, but is specific to battery storage. As a solar customer who also installs storage, you will receive an additional one-time rebate of \$300 per kilowatt hour of storage to help reduce the cost of battery storage and provide your home with more energy resilience.

You can combine these rebates with other existing federal and state financial incentives to further offset the cost to install a new solar panel system.

*\*Monthly savings on electric bills will vary and are not guaranteed, as each installation is unique, and savings will vary from customer to customer based on use and behavior.*

### When Did Net Metering Begin in Illinois?

Net Metering was implemented in Illinois in 2008 to incentivize the adoption of solar energy and build up a mature market. For years, the transition of Net Metering has been planned and negotiated, including during negotiations for the Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA) in 2015-2016 and the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) of 2021.

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### Why is Net Metering Changing?

Net Metering is a common practice nationwide to incentivize the adoption of solar energy and renewable energy technologies by making renewable energy more accessible and economically viable.

Typically, a Net Metering program starts with significant incentives to encourage rapid adoption of renewable energy technologies and is often planned to reduce its benefits over time as adoption of renewable energy reaches pre-identified thresholds.

### What is a Smart Inverter that is Required for the Rebate?

A smart inverter optimizes the performance and operation of a solar panel system. It communicates with the utility to adjust the power output and contribute to the grid stability, and it provides an additional layer of safety to protect the system during a power outage. The installation of smart inverters with solar panel systems is another step toward achieving a more reliable energy grid that implements a Virtual Power Plant (VPP) program.

A VPP is a decentralized network of energy resources (think solar panel installations across hundreds of households and businesses) to ensure that the power grid’s energy supply is balanced, stable, and meets demand. Participation in a VPP program can provide additional incentives to owners of solar plus storage for supporting the grid during critical times. Illinois is currently exploring VPP program options.

### What if My Energy is supplied By a Municipality or Cooperative?

The change to Net Metering will not apply to you. This change will only impact customers of investor-owned utilities in Illinois, such as ComEd, Ameren, and MidAmerican.



Information on the Net Metering transition continues to evolve. Please scan the QR code to monitor for new updates to the FAQs and other resources on the Solar Powers Illinois Net Metering resources page.

