



TOOLKIT

Rooftop Solar



Rooftop Solar System
State Fair Park, Wisconsin
Source: shutterstock



Overview

One of the most personal and tangible ways that Wisconsinites experience solar power is from rooftop solar on their homes and businesses. Rooftop solar is an affordable, reliable, and safe power source. Thanks to solar power, homeowners and business owners are saving money on their energy bills and helping cut carbon pollution.

However, many Wisconsinites do not have accurate information about the benefits of rooftop solar—or they don't think they can afford solar panels on their homes, despite new tax credits making it easier than ever before.

It is important to educate communities and ensure policymakers are hearing from families, business owners, and solar industry workers who benefit from this safe, effective and affordable energy source.

This resource guide explains how to communicate with family, friends, and neighbors to build grassroots support for rooftop solar and push back against the confusion and misinformation being spread about the industry.

Each section of this toolkit will help you build support for key rooftop solar projects, collaborate with local leaders and decision-makers, and educate your neighbors about the significant benefits of solar energy.



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For any inquiries on how to use this toolkit or any of its items,
please contact info@wisconsinforenergyindependence.com.

How to Talk to Your Neighbors about Rooftop Solar

Having meaningful conversations about solar power with your friends, family, and neighbors is one of the most effective ways to build support in your community for rooftop solar by allowing them to hear from someone they trust.

Additionally, many people who are interested in installing a solar system need more information on how to take advantage of the tax credits available to them.

The following provides some high-level talking points to help you talk about the benefits of solar power in your community and resources to point people toward to make sure they have the information they need to access tax credits.

Suggested language you can use when talking to your community:

- If you're like me, you're tired of paying an arm and a leg for your electricity bill. Ever since we installed solar panels on our roofs, we've cut our monthly bills [INSERT NUMBER].
- What's more—I know that our energy bill is going to be the same each month. This helps me better plan our family budget. Planning our monthly expenses was way more difficult when we were always subject to volatile cost swings of oil and gas.
- I was worried I wouldn't be able to afford installing solar, but I took advantage of tax credits that helped pay for the initial cost—and we will **save** thousands of dollars over the years.
- The price of solar energy in Wisconsin has become more affordable for families and businesses across the Badger State. Wisconsin homes and businesses can save thousands of dollars on electricity costs, before considering rising electricity rates.
- After we installed solar panels, I was shocked at how much our property value increased. According to [Zillow](#), homes with solar panels sell for 4.1% more on average than comparable homes without solar panels.
- We've all experienced power outages during a storm or heatwave—solar energy is way more reliable, generating power rain or shine. We don't have to worry anymore that the next storm is going to leave us without power for days.

Key resources to share with family, friends, and community members on how they can access tax credits for rooftop solar systems:

WISCONSIN RESOURCES:

- [DSIRE Incentives Database – Wisconsin](#)
- [Renew Wisconsin](#)
- [Solar Panel Cost in Wisconsin](#)
- [Solar Rebates & Incentives in Wisconsin](#)
- [US Energy Information Administration – Wisconsin State Profile](#)
- [Wisconsin Department of Energy](#)
- [Wisconsin Public Service Commission](#)

NATIONAL RESOURCES:

- **U.S. Department of Energy:** [Homeowner's Guide to the Federal Tax Credit for Solar Photovoltaics](#)
- **Consumer Reports:** [How the Solar Tax Credit Works](#)
- **Energy Sage:** [Solar Calculator](#)
- **Turbo Tax:** [Federal Tax Credit for Residential Solar Energy](#)
- **Solar Energy Industries Association:** [Rooftop Solar Guide](#)
- **Sunrun:** [Solar Incentives by State](#)

How to Host Rooftop Solar Events

Connecting with community members and leaders is important to voicing your message about the benefits of rooftop solar panels. Meetings and events are vital to inform and engage communities about solar projects and initiatives in your area. These opportunities provide ways to grow your solar support group and connect with community leaders on the future of solar in your community.

The following overview provides steps to organize and host events and meetings about solar energy for your community.

Below is a step-by-step guide:

1. Define event objectives

- Before you start planning, clearly outline the objectives of your event. Determine if you would like to raise awareness, promote rooftop solar adoption, showcase your rooftop solar system, or focus on cost savings you have seen from your rooftop solar panels. Your objectives and goals will help you clearly define your content and format of the event.

2. Form an event organizing team

- Build a dedicated group of individuals who are passionate about rooftop solar energy and community engagement. Assign specific roles and responsibilities to each team member, ensuring efficient event planning and execution.

3. Choose type of event to host

- Select an event that aligns with a positive outcome for solar in your community:
 - Informational session
 - Community solar celebration
- Tailor the format of your event to be informative, interactive, and appealing to attendees.

4. Set the date, time, and location

- Select a convenient date, time, and location for your solar energy event or meeting. Consider the availability of your target audience when choosing.
- Determine the location of your event and plan accordingly:



Indoors

Consider room size and space needed for guests



Outdoors

Access to electrical outlets (if needed) and coverings or nearby venues in case of unpredicted weather events



Online

Make sure the meeting room is set up so guests can participate in discussions and easily ask questions

5. Develop the agenda

- Create a detailed agenda that outlines the event's schedule, including speakers, topics of conversation, activities, and breaks. Be sure to allow for time at the end for Q&A sessions and networking opportunities. Share the agenda with speakers and collaborators for input before confirming the final schedule.

6. Prepare promotional materials

- Design promotional materials such as event posters, flyers, and social media graphics. Include the date, time, location, and any other registration details.
- Promote your event or meeting on social media, at local community centers, and through word of mouth with neighbors, friends, family, and community leaders. Engage with community influencers and partners to help spread information.

7. Engage local community leaders

- Reach out to local solar energy companies, environmental organizations, educational institutions, and community leaders. Invite them to participate as sponsors, speakers, or exhibitors. Their involvement will add credibility and attract more attendees.

How to Host Rooftop Solar Events

8. Send personal invitations

- Personally invite key community leaders, decision-makers, and stakeholders to attend the event. Personal invitations demonstrate the significance of their presence and encourage higher attendance.

9. Coordinate event logistics

- As the event date approaches, ensure all logistical aspects are in order. This includes confirming speakers, arranging necessary equipment, setting up event spaces, and preparing any materials or resources needed.

10. Host the solar energy event

- On the day of the event, welcome attendees warmly, introduce speakers, and follow the planned agenda. Encourage active participation and create opportunities for attendees to network and share ideas.

11. Gather feedback and follow up

- After the event, seek feedback from attendees through surveys or feedback forms. Use this valuable input to improve future events. Follow up with attendees by sharing event highlights, additional resources, and ways for them to stay engaged in solar energy initiatives.



QUESTIONS?

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How to Share Your Rooftop Solar Story

When it comes to building local support for solar, you are one of the most trusted voices in your community. Wisconsin has enough solar installed to **power over** 212,000 homes.

By talking with family, friends, and neighbors about how you've benefited from your rooftop solar system—from saving money to cutting air pollution—you have the power to truly move the needle on the ground.

Social media in particular plays a vital role in making meaningful change in local communities. It helps people stay informed, engaged, and inspired. That includes taking photos of your rooftop solar panels and sharing your story online.

Below is a step-by-step guide:

Rooftop Solar Influencer 101

1. Familiarize yourself with the latest rebates, tax credits, and incentives on rooftop solar in your state.

2. Choose your niche and brand

- Start by identifying topics and policies in solar energy that align with your interests. This could be tactics to cut carbon pollution, boost the installation of solar panels, or raising awareness on the cost savings available with solar energy.
- Develop a brand that reflects your niche and allows you to stand out as an influential figure in solar energy posts. Consider the following when developing your brand:
 - Name
 - Tone
 - Look and feel of your content

3. Build your social media profiles

- Create accounts on relevant social media platforms such as:

facebook



Instagram

nextdoor



Threads

- Create profiles along with bios and links to your other social media accounts. This will allow people who view your page to interact with your other content and get to know you and your values more.
- Include relevant key terms and hashtags associated with solar energy in your bio and other sections of your profile.

4. Plan and strategize your content

- Develop a content strategy to consistently engage with your audience. This can be done through:
 - Scheduling posts in advance for specific days on a content calendar
 - Viewing other similar profiles to see effective and ineffective content strategies
 - Monitor platform-specific trends (popular topics, types of images, memes, etc.)
 - Choosing if content should be educational, entertaining, or inspiring
- Encourage followers to engage with your posts and share their own solar experiences
- Diversify your content by using a variety of:

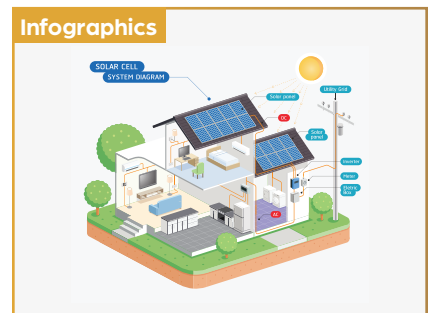
Photos



Videos



Infographics



Live Streams



News Stories



5. Create your content

- Focus on creating visually appealing and informative content. Your content should draw and maintain the attention of your followers and other viewers engaging with you for the first time. To ensure your content is high-quality, edit and review before you post any videos or photos to your account.

6. Engage and collaborate with other content creators:

- Build a following by responding to comments, messages, and questions from your followers.
- Engage with other influencers by liking, commenting, and sharing similar positive solar content.
- Collaborate with similar influencers, brands, groups, or organizations to increase your reach on social media and grow as an influencer.
- Use hashtags to increase your posts' visibility and discoverability. Your posts should use similar hashtags to other popular solar energy influencers, or you can create your own.

7. Track and adjust your content

- Monitor your social media analytics to see which posts perform the best and worst. Track metrics such as reach, impressions, and follower growth. By tracking your metrics, you will be able to create content that has high engagement with your accounts' viewers. Experiment with different approaches to improve your content and engagement levels.



American Family Insurance
1.26 MKw Madison, Wisconsin
Photo Credit: Renew Wisconsin

Photographing Your Solar System

To get started, all you need is a camera or a smartphone!

1. Think through Framing.

- Make sure you are capturing your solar panels from an angle that displays them as prominently as possible. Framing will also make sure you're not capturing anything you don't want to shoot.

2. Find the Best Lighting

- Try and capture your rooftop solar panels in the best light possible. This means ideally taking pictures when the sun is shining.

How to Share Your Rooftop Solar Story

3. Steady Yourself with a Tripod

- If your shots seem a bit blurry, try using a tripod. This tool will steady your camera and can also open up a range of new techniques and photography styles, such as long-exposures, time-lapse, and many others.

4. Share Your Photos Often

- Posting an image of your solar panels in accompaniment with social media text will help get your post more engagement and traction.

5. Have Fun

- Taking photos of your rooftop solar panels is meant to be fun. Be creative and authentic to you.

Posting on Social Media

Once you have your photos, the next step is sharing them with your friends, neighbors, and family. Below is a step-by-step how-to guide on how to support rooftop solar on social media to make sure your post is making the most impact.

1. Emphasize your personal story and how rooftop solar is benefiting your home and/or business:

- Your personal account on how rooftop solar is cutting your energy bill makes you a powerful validator.

2. Choose your preferred social media platform:

facebook



Instagram

nextdoor

TikTok

Threads



3. Craft engaging and informative content:

- Amplify ongoing or upcoming solar energy projects in your community that have received news coverage.
- Take a photo of your solar panels and highlight how much your family, business, or farm has saved on your energy bills.
- Encourage followers to share their own solar experiences.
- Re-post content from local solar energy providers, organizations, or experts.
- Monitor comments, direct messages, or mentions related to your account, posts, or events to encourage discussion to foster an engaged solar community.

4. Find pro-solar content:

- Search for hashtags with key solar phrases, follow accounts that regularly post, exploring your “For you” feed on platforms like Twitter and Instagram
- Like and follow accounts that produce similar posts to increase the amount of additional pro-solar content you can engage with.

5. Don'ts of social media engagement:

- Do not follow accounts that post misinformation about solar energy – always i can report posts and accounts that spread mis- and disinformation.
- Do not engage with, amplify, or re-post content containing misinformation about solar energy.
- Do not comment or respond to accounts that make overtly negative comments on your posts – only respond to accounts that engage with your content in an informative or collaborative/civil manner.
- Do not engage with bot accounts – these accounts might look like regular people, but they are often identifiable by the information in their bio. If you're unsure about the legitimacy of an account, check to see who they are following, how much they post, and what their content looks like.

General tips:

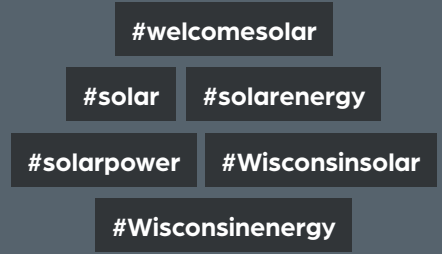
IMAGES

Include visuals (pictures, infographics, video clips, etc.) whenever possible; posts with media are more likely to get engagement and are seen more often on social media feeds.



HASHTAGS

Use hashtags to help promote posts to other individuals and organizations promoting solar.



Sample Social Media Content for X/Twitter:

- The [#solar](#) panels on my home have provided me with a reliable source of power! They are easy to maintain and save me so much on my electricity bill every month. I can't imagine my home without them!
- I recently learned that there are tax credits available to install [#solarpower](#) on your home or business! Congress passed a law ensuring that Wisconsinites who install solar panels will receive a 30% residential clean energy tax credit. Excited to claim mine!
- To counter the high cost of my energy bill, I will be installing solar panels on my home. I'm looking forward to the money I will save every year when I make the switch to [#solar](#)!
- Gas and oil prices have continued to fluctuate, but that has not been the case with [#solarenergy](#). As long as the sun shines, Wisconsin does not have to worry about being subject to the volatile prices they are used to with fossil fuels. [#welcomesolar](#)

Helpful solar accounts to follow:

WISCONSIN ACCOUNTS

Instagram:

- [Renew Wisconsin](#)

Twitter:

- [Renew Wisconsin](#)
- [Wisconsin Community Solar Economic Alliance](#)

Facebook:

- [Renew Wisconsin](#)
- [Wisconsin Solar Energy Industries Association \(WiSEIA\)](#)
- [Wisconsin Solar Info](#)

LinkedIn:

- [Renew Wisconsin](#)
- [Solar Energy Laboratory, University of Wisconsin – Madison](#)

OTHER ACCOUNTS

Instagram:

- [simplesolarofficial](#)
- [solarindustry](#)
- [solareworld](#)

X:

- [@SolarEnergyNews](#)
- [@SEIA](#)
- [@SolarPowerUSA](#)
- [@SolarNeighbors](#)
- [@SolarAccess](#)

Facebook:

- [Commission for Community Solar Access \(CCSA\)](#)
- [PowMr Solar Energy](#)
- [Renewable Energy \(wind, solar\)](#)
- [SOLAR ENERGY SOLUTIONS](#)
- [Solar Energy Promotion](#)
- [Solar Energy: Green Advocates for Renewable Energy](#)
- [Solar & Energy](#)
- [Solar Energy Network & News](#)
- [Solar Energy Experts](#)
- [Solar Energy World](#)
- [Solar Energy Industries Association](#)
- [Solar United Neighbors](#)

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Rooftop Solar System
State Fair Park, Wisconsin
Source: shutterstock