



## DISTRIBUTED GENERATION



## CONNECTING WITH YOUR CO-OP



In 2013, a law went into effect that requires owners to provide written notification to their cooperative of their intent to construct or install a distributed generation (DG) system that will be attached to an electric or transmission line. The notification must be made at least 30 days prior to the start of construction.

The following are considered distributed generation systems used to generate electricity:

- Solar
- Wind turbine
- Waste management
- Resource recovery
- Refuse-derived fuel
- Agricultural crops or residues
- Wood burning facilities

In the written notice, the owners must provide information on the type of system and the anticipated completion date of construction.

If you're just starting out in the process to invest in a DG system on your property, make an appointment to visit with your cooperative representative in order to gain an understanding of the expectations for both you and the cooperative.

We'll discuss with you the issues of safety, reliability, integrity of the power grid, and fairness in terms of cost to other members.

You must meet certain requirements that allow your cooperative to maintain the reliability of the power grid and to ensure any associated costs are not imposed on other members.

Important steps for cooperative members:

- Arrange a meeting with your electric cooperative.
- Understand your responsibilities and costs.
- Work with your cooperative to develop a written agreement.
- Decide if a DG system is right for you.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT

[www.consumersenergy.coop](http://www.consumersenergy.coop)

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)  
Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy  
[www.energysavers.gov](http://www.energysavers.gov)

Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives  
[www.iowarec.org/publications/solar-resources](http://www.iowarec.org/publications/solar-resources)

Florida Solar Energy Center  
[www.fsec.usf.edu/en/](http://www.fsec.usf.edu/en/)



Innovative



Interconnection



## ADDING VALUE TO YOUR ELECTRIC SERVICE



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



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# YOUR TRUSTED PARTNER



## COOPERATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative is a partner in providing you with safe, reliable electric service. The cooperative has requirements designed to protect the safety of members and cooperative employees; maintain the integrity and reliability of the grid; and ensure cost fairness for all members.

To have reliable electric service available at times when your system isn't producing sufficient energy to meet your needs, your cooperative provides backup electricity. Because of this connection, DG owners must work with their cooperative to meet their requirements to keep the grid reliable and safe.

Once all interconnection requirements are met and the safety and integrity of the system meet all necessary criteria, then your cooperative is responsible for the final stages of the interconnection.

A written agreement between the cooperative and the member ensures proper communication and protections are in place prior to connection of the DG system to the grid.

Iowa's electric cooperatives support distributed generation as long as it is developed and installed in compliance with both the respective cooperative's policies and local, state and federal laws and regulations.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY CONSIDERATIONS

DG systems are most effective as part of an energy-efficient home. Purchasing and installing one of these systems can be a significant investment for a member. Therefore, your cooperative recommends carefully researching the potential investment, so you make the right decision for your home.

## MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Your first step in considering a DG system investment should be to contact your cooperative for trusted answers to any questions you may have. Do your homework and thoroughly research your options before writing the check on your investment.

Installing a distributed generation system requires that certain responsibilities are met by all parties involved in the process. As an owner of the DG system, you're responsible for obtaining the proper equipment and ensuring that all requirements of your cooperative's interconnection agreement are met, including paying any necessary costs.

You're also responsible for any ongoing maintenance and system repairs.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Is distributed generation right for me?

Ultimately, it's up to you to determine whether a DG system is a worthwhile investment. Your cooperative does not provide financial analysis, but we can assist in getting you to the right people who can. You'll want to determine your goals (e.g., environmental stewardship, offsetting your energy demand), evaluate the type and size of system desired, understand your financial responsibility, and investigate and understand all applicable requirements and regulations.

### Should I invest in energy efficiency improvements first?

YES! Completion of a thorough energy efficiency audit is an important precursor to considering and understanding the economics of a DG system. Implementing energy efficiency measures in advance of installing a system can not only

save you money by reducing your overall energy or water consumption, but also subsequently reduces the size of the DG system you'll need to match your demand.

### What type of DG system should I choose?

Factors such as your geographic location, city and county codes and zoning requirements, and overall system economics will be important considerations in your decision-making process. Also, you should understand your cooperative's policies for purchasing the power you don't consume if you have excess generation. Your cooperative can help you identify what time of day you are using the most energy and the profile of your usage across all hours to help you determine what will work best.

### Are there state or federal incentives or tax credits?

The Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency (DSIRE) – [www.dsireusa.org](http://www.dsireusa.org) – is one source of information on state and federal incentives, tax credits and policies that support renewables and energy efficiency in the U.S. The website features an interactive map which allows users to click on a state to see a comprehensive listing of all federal and state incentives, credits, exemptions, grants, loans and rebates for residential and commercial/industrial projects and programs.

### What are my insurance needs?

In accordance with Iowa law, all DG owners are required to provide proof of some type of general liability insurance as part of the interconnection agreement. For systems smaller than 1MW, homeowner's insurance is referred to by the rules as one acceptable form of general liability insurance without any specific minimum amount of coverage.