

# Solar Energy: Next Steps

## Increase your efficiency:

Before you invest in a solar energy system, take a good look at reducing your present energy usage and save money. The best place to start is by scheduling an energy audit through your utility company. WMECO customers have the option to request a solar site assessment when scheduling the audit. For more on this visit: [http://www.cetonline.org/Home/for\\_your\\_home.php](http://www.cetonline.org/Home/for_your_home.php)

## Evaluate your site:

Decide if a solar energy system is appropriate for your site.  
<http://www.cetonline.org/Renewables/SiteEvaluation.php>

If you have already had a utility-sponsored energy audit, consider getting a CET Green Home Audit for more advanced diagnostics relating to renewable energy applications. For information and rates, contact Megan at 413-586-7350 ext. 21. Download the Green Home Audit Brochure here:  
[http://www.cetonline.org/Home/GreenAuditBrochure\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.cetonline.org/Home/GreenAuditBrochure_FINAL.pdf)

Determine which type of solar energy system is most appropriate for your site.

<http://www.cetonline.org/Renewables/SolarTypes.php>  
[http://www.cetonline.org/Renewables/hot\\_water.php](http://www.cetonline.org/Renewables/hot_water.php)

## Costs and paybacks:

For solar hot water systems and photovoltaic systems.

[http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/your\\_home/water\\_heating/index.cfm/mytopic=12910](http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/your_home/water_heating/index.cfm/mytopic=12910)  
[http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/your\\_home/electricity/index.cfm/mytopic=10750](http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/your_home/electricity/index.cfm/mytopic=10750)

## Rebates, grants and tax incentives:

There are many benefits to owning renewable energy systems, and financial incentives make it more attractive to do so now. See <http://www.cetonline.org/Renewables/Incentives.pdf>

## Installers:

When you are ready to move ahead with solar energy, we recommend that you contact several solar installers to compare proposals for systems based on your site, energy usage and budget.

<http://www.cetonline.org/Renewables/WMassInstallers.pdf>

## Zoning and permits:

Depending on the type of solar energy system you plan to install, you will most likely need to obtain building, electrical and/or plumbing permits. Typically, the contractor will take care of this, but it's a good idea to research your local permit and neighborhood covenant requirements ahead of time.

[http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/your\\_home/electricity/index.cfm/mytopic=10760](http://www.eere.energy.gov/consumer/your_home/electricity/index.cfm/mytopic=10760)

## Other options for supporting renewable energy:

If solar energy is not a good fit, consider a clean energy program such as New England GreenStartsm (National Grid customers) or the New England Wind Fundsm (WMECO customers, municipal utility or any large business account). [http://www.cetonline.org/Renewables/support\\_renewables.php](http://www.cetonline.org/Renewables/support_renewables.php)

Your contributions earn matching funds for a renewable energy project in your community.

<http://www.cetonline.org/Renewables/renewable.php>



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