



DRAFT 10/19/17

Solar Energy in Ashland County

The Ashland County Comprehensive Plan supports the development of solar energy in the county. This web page was developed to assist both homeowners and businesses interested in adding solar energy equipment. Read on to learn about any permit requirements, funding opportunities and other considerations.

Permits

A county construction permit is not required for a residential solar system, unless the proposed location will be within a Shoreland Protection Zone. (Generally within 1,000 feet of a lake or stream.) If your location is within a Shoreland Protection Zone a permit is required and you will need to follow a few guidelines, see below. Business or commercial installations of solar equipment will also require a permit.

To get a permit for an installation that falls within a Shoreland Protection Zone and/or for a commercial installation contact the Zoning office, first floor of the courthouse, 715-682-7017. For more information see the [Ashland County Zoning webpage](#).

You should also contact officials in your town or village to see if any additional permits are required. Contact information is available at the website listed above.

Where required, a county permit fee is \$100.

Funding Assistance

As of August 2017, there are several possible sources of funding for your solar project. See the links below for more information:

- [Federal Tax Credit for renewable energy](#). A 30% tax credit for homeowners for solar installations.

- [Wisconsin Focus on Energy](#). Renewable energy incentives. Your utility must participate in the Focus on Energy program to qualify for these incentives.
- [Property Assessed Clean Energy \(PACE\)](#) is a program for business and commercial building owners. Ashland County passed enabling ordinances in May of 2017 that open this program to businesses in the county. See the PACE Wisconsin website for details.

Utility Partners and Interconnection Requirements

In Ashland County citizens are served by one of three utilities, please refer to your local utility companies contact information below.

1. [Xcel Energy](#)
The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin has established interconnection agreements and applications for generation up to 20kW and between 20kW and 15MW. Please refer to the Xcel Energy link for permitting requirements for residential call (800)-895-4999 or 800-481-4700 for commercial projects.
2. [Bayfield Electric Coop](#)
 - a. The state required interconnection agreement.
 - i. Under 20kW: <https://psc.wi.gov/SiteAssets/DG20orLessApplication.pdf>
 - ii. Over 20kW: <https://psc.wi.gov/SiteAssets/DG20orMoreApplication.pdf>
 - b. Single Line Diagram – should include the following: systems components, voltages and amperages, size, wiring, and how the system will be connected to property.
 - c. Contact Information:
Monday thru Friday 7:30 am to 4:00 pm.
1-800-278-0166 or 715-372-428
3. [Price Electric Cooperative](#)
 - [For further information about interconnection to Prior Electric Coop use the following link: Price Electric Cooperative](#)
 - i. <http://www.price-electric.com/content/distributed-generation>
 - ii. Or call: (715) 339-2155

Both Xcel Energy and Bayfield Electric have offered opportunities for customers to participate in Solar Garden projects whereby customers purchase ‘shares’ of a large solar array and receive proportional credits to their utility bill. See their websites for more information on these opportunities.

Contractors/Installers

The [Focus on Energy program](#) maintains a list of professionals who install solar systems in Wisconsin. You can search the site by zip code to locate contractors in your area. The program calls contractors 'trade allies.'

Chequamegon Bay Renewables also maintains a list of contractors as well as other useful information regarding incentives, policy and other renewable energy related issues. Their contractor list and related information can be found at these links:

[Cheq Bay Renewables - Products & Services link](#)

[Cheq Bay Renewables - Policies & Incentives](#)

[Cheq Bay Renewables - Initiatives](#)

Solar Systems in the County

Northland College in Ashland has installed a number of renewable energy systems including solar hot water, solar photo voltaic and wind. The following link describes one of those projects.

[Northland College - Solar Arrays New Story](#)

[Solar Initiatives](#) link - (CE-4a - 20 points, CE-5b - 5 points, CE-5d - 5 points) by adding the Chequamegon Bay Renewable Initiatives link, the County will be in "outreach support" to the public about the [utility-provided community solar programs](#) (Bayfield's Electric and Xcel Energy Community Solar Programs). In addition, CE-5b and CE-5d should be met from based upon information provided on the [solar PV group buy](#) link.

Wisconsin State Solar Access Rights

According to Wisconsin State law ([66.0401](#)) an application for a permit will only be denied if; the denial is necessary to preserve or protect the health and safety, or an alternative system of comparable cost and efficiency would be permitted; and provided further that conditions may be imposed upon a permit if they:

- a) Serve to pre-serve or protect public health or safety, or
- b) Does not significantly increase the cost of the system or significantly decrease efficiency.
- c) Allows for an alternate system of comparable costs and efficiency.

Help us promote solar projects in the County. Even if your project does not require a permit, we'd like to know about it so we can have a sense of the growth of solar power in the county. Please tell us a few details about your project by clicking on **this link**. It should only take you a couple minutes. Thank You!