Before you begin...

Energy efficiency is the cleanest energy of all. Before you add solar, make your house as efficient as possible so that you can size your system appropriately. TIP: If you’re looking for ways to improve your efficiency, get an energy audit through your local utility and schedule a visit from the Home Energy Squad (homeenergysquad.net). Also, taking the Minnesota Energy Challenge (menergychallenge.org) can give you some tips.

1: GET EDUCATED

Attend a free solar workshop. Find upcoming CERTs events about energy (events.mncerts.org) and classes offered by Minnesota Renewable Energy Society (mrenewables.org). Also check out our solar page (solar.mncerts.org). If you still have questions contact Metro CERT staff at diana@cleanenergyresourceteams.org.

2: START PLANNING

Consider your budget, roof life and structure, and sun exposure. Solar can be more than just electricity! Solar technologies (electric, hot water, and space heating) differ in their cost and installation requirements. A solar site assessor can help you decide which are the best fit for your home and needs. TIP: Using a third party to get an unbiased opinion for your site assessment can be helpful. Clean Energy Project Builder (thecleanenergybuilder.com), MRES (mrenewables.org), and Midwest Renewable Energy Association (midwestrenew.org) offer this service.

Locate programs. Find programs in the Twin Cities below. Incentives are also always up to date at dsireusa.org.

### Statewide Resources
- **Federal Tax Credit**: Covers 30% of total system cost

### Local Utility Programs
- **Xcel Energy**: Minnesota-Made Bonus - $2.75/W or up to 60% of system cost in conjunction with Solar*Rewards, whichever is less (bit.ly/mnmadebonus)
- **Xcel Energy**: Solar*Rewards - $1.50/W up to 40kW, based on availability (bit.ly/solarrewards)
- **Wright-Hennepin Coop**: Solar Community - Members buy into a community solar project and get credit for the power their portion produces (whsolarcommunity.com)

Next Steps
- 3: Get Bids
- 4: Sign Contract
- 5: Install Solar
- 6: Share Success
3: GET BIDS

Compare bids from several solar contractors.
You can use our online directory, the Clean Energy Project Builder (thecleanenergybuilder.com), to help you search for solar contractors. The Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources provides a useful set of questions to ask a potential contractor (bit.ly/solarhire). Tip: Most contractors will charge you a fee for coming out to do a site assessment but then subtract that amount from your contract if you select them. Sometimes you can get site assessments for free or reduced costs in months when installations are slower (December, January, and February in MN).

4: SIGN CONTRACT

Select a contractor and sign a contract. This spells out the project details and terms for each party.

5: INSTALL SOLAR

Your contractor acquires permits and installs your system. Complete IRS Residential Energy Credit Form 5695 to submit with your federal tax return (bit.ly/solarirs). Tip: After signing a contract, project completion usually takes several weeks depending on the type of solar technology and the process. If installing a photovoltaic (PV) system, your contractor will facilitate an interconnection agreement with your electric utility. Additionally, you can talk to your solar installer about monitoring equipment to track your system production and performance.

6: SHARE YOUR SUCCESS

Give Metro CERT staff a heads up about your project. We’re always interested in hearing about Minnesotans going solar! Your story could be inspiration for others interested in moving forward on a project. You can contact Diana at diana@cleanenergyresourceteams.org.