

Deciding If Renewable Energy Is a Good Fit for You

Using renewable energy, such as wind or solar power, is an increasingly popular trend, but before committing to a renewable energy option, it is important to make sure it is right for you. A renewable energy system is an investment that should be carefully considered and thoroughly assessed.

It is important to consider if renewable energy can help meet your goals, which type of system would be the most cost effective and efficient, and if a renewable system is even possible for your location. To assist in making the decision, the Energy Education Council has developed a renewable installation checklist that includes questions and resources for addressing and learning about important issues on renewable energy.

The checklist is available at [EnergyEdCouncil.org/checklist.pdf](https://www.energyedcouncil.org/checklist.pdf) and can help you answer questions about current energy usage, system maintenance, and energy savings. The checklist has two parts. The first contains important questions and resources for evaluating renewable energy possibilities *before* calling a qualified installer to help you have an informed, productive conversation. The second section contains questions to ask *during* meetings with qualified installers.

A homeowner or small business owner armed with the knowledge gained from answering the renewable energy installation questions will be vastly better informed and ready to tackle the project and attain his or her goals.

Efficiency should always be the first step in the quest for saving money on energy. Many utilities offer no or low cost energy audits that will show where homes and businesses are wasting money through poor efficiency. Some energy providers will even reimburse the cost of the audit when efficiency improvements are made. The cheapest, cleanest, and greenest energy is the energy not used, and this comes from energy efficiency.

There are a variety of energy efficiency steps that can be taken to make a home or business more energy efficient. There are even no-cost efficiency measures. They include turning off lights when leaving a room, setting computers to go into sleep mode when not in use, and using power strips to cut down on energy use. Low-cost measures include replacing burned out incandescent bulbs with CFL or LED bulbs, caulking and weather-stripping windows and doors, and cleaning or replacing air conditioner and furnace filters.

For more information on energy efficiency and renewable energy, visit [EnergyEdCouncil.org](https://www.energyedcouncil.org).