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## SOLAR OWNERSHIP OPTIONS

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As your Touchstone Energy cooperative, we are your source for energy and information. Since interest in solar power generation is growing, we put together a series of fact sheets to help answer questions you might have. Contact us for more information about solar and assistance in making decisions about whether solar is a good option for you.

### RENT OR BUY?

These are options you face when searching for a place to live and when you need a new vehicle. You'll face these same choices when you invest in solar. Here are some points to consider when exploring various methods of adding solar to your home.

### PURCHASE

- You'll be responsible for making the decisions on what system to purchase, choosing a reputable contractor, and more. It's a big investment, so you'll need to spend time researching, asking questions, obtaining multiple bids, and reviewing contracts.
- To cover the cost of purchasing your solar system, you can pay cash or obtain a loan. The system will be yours, and you'll reap the benefits of all power you generate from the system.
- Because you are the owner of the system, you'll have to pay up front for the components and all installation and connectivity costs. You'll most likely be responsible for maintenance and repair costs, and will bear liability for the system. While some installers offer service and maintenance contracts, not all do. You may be able to negotiate that in your contract; be sure to get details in writing before signing.
- As the system's owner, you'll be able to take advantage of

federal, state, and local incentives – including a 30 percent federal tax credit. (Consult your financial / tax advisor).

### LEASE (THIRD-PARTY OWNERSHIP)

Note that third-party ownership—or leasing—is not offered in all locations. If this is an option for you, consider these points.

- Leasing should reduce your up-front costs to install a solar system. Some leases offer a no-money-down option, and some leasing programs are structured so that the projected savings in electricity purchases offsets the lease payments.
- You'll notice a wide range of solar lease programs. Variables include the amount of money you'll have to pay up front, the length and term of the lease, and responsibilities, both yours and the leasing company's. The differences between lease offers can be enormous, so be sure you understand all terms and conditions, and that you determine which options are most advantageous to your situation.
- With most solar leases, you'll enter into a long-term contract—usually 15 to 20 years. Although the system is installed on your home's roof, you won't own the system, can't claim Renewable Energy Credits (RECs), and can't take advantage of any state or federal incentives. That's because those rights belong to the leasing company. You will, however, receive all power produced by the solar system, at the rate negotiated in your contract.

There are two primary leasing arrangements you might encounter. In one, you would sign a long-term lease for the hardware - like leasing a car. The second involves entering into a contract to purchase the power produced by the solar system that the leasing company installs on your roof.

- Some third-party solar companies also offer the opportunity for consumers to purchase their panels, either during or at the end of the contract. If you are interested in this option, be sure it is in the contract you sign.

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