



What is *Solarize the Valley*?

A program to accelerate installation of rooftop solar in the Treasure Valley, create a stronger solar market and deliver economic and environmental benefits to the community. This year, Solarize the Valley is building upon its very successful 2016 campaign in southwest Idaho which led to 49 solar installations totaling 314 kilowatts (kW) and nearly \$1 million in local economic investment. The Snake River Alliance will connect you directly with a carefully selected solar installer to provide top-quality service and North American solar panels.

Why Should I Sign Up for *Solarize the Valley*?

- We make it easy and affordable to harness clean energy in Idaho now
- Invest in energy independence for your home, business, place of worship or nonprofit organization with photovoltaic (PV) solar panels
- Protect against Idaho Power electric rate hikes of 4% to 5% a year
- Reduce your carbon footprint and dependence on Snake River hydropower
- Claim a 30% federal tax credit and additional state tax deductions
- Support local job creation
- Great, below-market prices, negotiated with trusted installers
- Eliminate the hassle of getting and sorting through multiple contractor bids
- Increase the resale value of your home (See [study in 2015 by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory](#) .)

How Do I Get Started?

Sign up at the *Solarize the Valley* website, www.solarizethevalley.org for your solar site assessment. Be prepared to supply contact and location information and upload your electric bill to be used to evaluate the suitability of your building and your cost estimate. You will get a call from our staff or a volunteer Solar Ambassador to pre-qualify your application.

Do I Have a Good Rooftop for Solar?

Site suitability depends on which way your roof faces, (south, east and west are appropriate), whether you have lots of shade, and the amount of electricity you use. *Solarize the Valley* may use satellite images to evaluate your property's suitability for solar. Solar panels can be installed on most roof types (except shake) and on sloped and flat roofs. Note, additional fees may apply for some roof types (i.e. tile) and ground-mounted systems.

What Will My Solar Panels Power?

The solar panels will be connected to your existing electric system. A power inverter converts and synchronizes with the power grid. When it's sunny your solar panels will power your home. When it's not sunny, your home will use electricity from Idaho Power. Your system comes with software that lets you see what each of your solar panels is producing and follow along with the sun on your computer, tablet or smart phone.

Can My Solar System Provide Back-up Power to My Home if the Power Goes Out?

No, solar systems provided within the Solarize the Valley program are “grid-tied” systems and shutdown if no power is being supplied from Idaho Power. This helps ensure workers are safe while working to repair the grid outage. Over 99% of solar systems installed in Idaho and across the U.S. are “grid-tied” systems.

What if I Produce More Power Than I Need?

When your solar panels produce more electricity than you use it goes to Idaho Power and is credited through the Net Energy Metering program which substantially reduces your overall power bill. Customers who generate more electricity than they consume over the course of a month will receive a kWh credit carried forward to offset consumption in future months. Excess energy credits carry forward indefinitely until they are entirely used to offset consumption or a customer discontinues service at the applicable home or business, whichever comes first.

Is Solar Really Affordable?

Solarize the Valley has negotiated very competitive pricing for residential and commercial solar installation. Solar panel installation for your home or business is an investment with an economic payback time that varies depending on how much solar capacity is installed and how much electricity the building uses. You pay money for electricity each month. By producing your own energy, instead of sending money to Idaho Power each month, you’ll be “sending” money to yourself, and before long you’ll have paid off your investment.

Is Financing Available?

Many private banks and credit unions can add solar panels to your mortgage as a home equity loan. The Idaho’s [State Energy Loan Program](#) offers 4% financing over 5-years for residences (\$1,000 to \$15,000) and businesses (\$1,000 to \$100,000) for renewable energy project such as solar panels.

Can You Help My Business or Nonprofit?

Yes, *Solarize the Valley* has special services to help get rooftop solar on businesses, churches, schools and nonprofit organizations in the Treasure Valley. If you are a member of a group that owns its own building and pays electricity bills – now is the time to consider investing in your organization’s sustainable future. Please sign up for a free evaluation and we will help you understand current prices and the return on investment for your business or presentation to your board of directors.

How Were the Solar Installation Companies Selected?

Early in 2017, the Snake River Alliance assembled a Technical Advisory Committee to help us create a transparent and fair process for selecting our solar installers. We issued a Request for Proposals to area installers and met with them to clarify each proposal. Equipment installed in this program will be North American solar panels and come with an industry-leading 10-year contractor workmanship warranty on the installation.

The Alliance negotiated contracts with two companies that offered the best value and reliability for our customers. [AltEnergy](#) and [Bluebird Solar & Light](#) were selected to handle both residential and commercial customers for *Solarize the Valley*.

Who Runs this Program?

Solarize the Valley is a program of the Snake River Alliance Education Fund, Inc. The Alliance is a local non-profit organization founded in 1979 that advocates the use of solar energy to decrease Idaho’s heavy reliance on coal-burning and natural gas power plants. *Solarize the Valley* was created to accelerate the installation of solar panels in the Treasure Valley and move Idaho closer to 100% clean, renewable and reliable energy. Every solar array installed with *Solarize the Valley* results in a small contribution to the Alliance’s highly-effective Clean Energy Program.