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Price per square meter of rooftop PV panels



Overview

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Each year, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO) and its national laboratory partners analyze cost data for U.S. solar photovoltaic (PV) systems to develop cost benchmarks. These benchmarks help measure progress toward goals for reducing solar electricity costs.

Solar panels generate “free” electricity, but installing a system still costs money. A typical American household needs a 10-kilowatt (kW) system to adequately power their home, which costs \$28,241 in 2025. That price effectively drops to \$19,873 after considering the full federal solar tax credit.

Nowadays, solar energy adoption is accelerating, and understanding the solar panel cost per square meter is quite essential for anyone thinking about solar energy installation. Whether installed at home or in a business, or in huge installations, understanding the price per energy generated is.

NREL analyzes the total costs associated with installing photovoltaic (PV) systems for residential rooftop, commercial rooftop, and utility-scale ground-mount systems. This work has grown to include cost models for solar-plus-storage systems. NREL's PV cost benchmarking work uses a bottom-up.

How much you pay for your new solar panels depends mainly on the number of kWh you want to generate with them. If you prefer to look at the 11 square foot, one panel will occupy an average of 18 square foot. You can choose to use all the energy you consume each year as a guide, or you can generate.

As of 2025, the average cost of residential solar panels in the U.S. is between \$15,000 and \$25,000 before incentives. This typically translates to about \$2.50 to \$3.50 per watt of installed capacity (more on price per watt below). The total price depends on your system size, location, roof type.

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