

HOW TO:

HOST A SOLAR OPEN HOUSE



WHY ARE SOLAR OPEN HOUSES IMPORTANT?

A Solar Open House is an informal meet and greet at a solar homeowner's home. It is an opportunity for homeowners who are considering going solar to see solar in person. They can ask questions about the process of going solar and interact with solar homeowners from their community.

These events are a great opportunity for solar homeowners to share their experiences and to help homeowners who are considering going solar gain a greater level of comfort with the process, hopefully encouraging them to go solar themselves!



WHAT WILL YOU DO?

As a solar open house host you will:

- Open your home/school/business/nonprofit to host a Solar Open House. These events can happen in your front yard, in your garage, in front of your business, etc. Be creative!
Note: You do not need to let people into your home or business to host a solar open house.
- Promote the event to your friends, family, colleges, network
- Have your solar open house!
- Report back to Solar United Neighbors

HOW TO PREPARE:

CONSIDER THE EVENT'S FLOW

- a. Identify an area at the front of your home/business where you'll greet guests and have them sign in
- b. Identify the best gathering space at your home/business (inside or outside) to accommodate several people
 - i. If you expect good weather, perhaps outside in your yard or on your porch
 - If outside – consider seating and shade (trees or a pop up tent)

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- ii. If you expect bad weather, perhaps your living room, kitchen, dining room, or garage with the door open
 - If inside – consider seating

- c. Identify the best path through or around your home to give guests a little tour of:
 - i. **Your inverter and electric box**
 - ii. **Your solar panels** (from a place where they are visible from the ground)
 - iii. **Your computer or smart device** (show the website that tracks your system's production – if you don't have this, show graphs or visuals of your solar production and energy savings)

NOTE: If you need help identifying the different components of your solar system, send pictures of your system to getinvolved@solarunitedneighbors.org and we'll label them for you!

REVIEW SOLAR 101 GO SOLAR GUIDE

You are not expected to be a solar expert, but familiarizing yourself with the Go Solar Guide will be helpful when answering specific questions that guests may ask you. If you get questions you can't answer, don't worry! You can always provide the person with a Solar United Neighbors staff member's business card so they can follow up.

PRACTICE

- Practice your 2-3-minute talk about your experience going solar
- Practice giving your solar home tour

IDENTIFY A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER TO HELP

Identify a friend or family member to help out at your solar open house. Having someone to help greet people and sign them in as they arrive at your solar open house can be a HUGE help! This will allow you to focus on talking with attendees about solar, answering questions, showing them the handouts and solar resources available to them, and touring them around your solar home. They can also take photos during the event of you interacting with folks about solar! If you'd like us to help you find a volunteer to help at your event, please email us!

RUNNING THE OPEN HOUSE | DAY OF THE EVENT

1. SET UP - 1 HOUR BEFORE

- Have a phone or camera ready, so you (or ideally your friend or family member) can take photos throughout your solar open house

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- Photos of you showing your solar system to attendees, attendees talking and mingling, and even posed shots of groups of attendees in front of your solar panels are all great!
- Put out some directional signs at major turns on the roads around your home/business (if needed)
- Set up a small table with pens in front of your home or in the gathering area where people will sign in on the paper sign in sheets you've received as they arrive
 - Identify who will be stationed at the sign in table greeting guests throughout your solar open house (ideally a friend or family member so you can focus on talking about your solar)
 - It is critical that every person who attends your open house signs in with their name, email address, and zip code. This will allow us to follow up with them about solar and have an accurate of a count of people educated about solar across the country!
- Arrange seating, food/beverages, sign in sheets, printed resources and materials in your primary gathering space
- Set up a laptop in the main gathering space and open the webpage you use to track your solar panels' energy production.

2. DURING THE EVENT

- Make sure someone is always at the table with the event sign in sheet, ensuring that everyone who attends your solar open house signs in and provides their contact information
- Greet and mingle with guests as they arrive. Ask questions such as:
 - How did you hear about this solar open house?
 - What interests you about going solar?
 - Where are you at in the process of going solar?
- When you have a critical mass of people, address the group.
NOTE: "Critical mass" may only be a few people. It's best to make sure folks don't wait too long for the tour to start.
 - Introduce yourself
 - Let people know that you're glad they came and are interested in solar
 - Talk to the group for 2-3 minutes about:
 - When you went solar
 - Why you chose to go solar
 - What the process was like
- Tell guests that you'd like to take them on a tour of your solar system
 - Begin your short tour – making sure that the someone (ideally a friend or family member) stays in the sign in area to greet other incoming guests.

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- On your tour, be sure to show:
 - **Your solar panels** – explain the number of panels, number of kilowatts your system produces, how long it took to install
 - **Your inverter** – explain what the inverter does and show where you can see that the panels are currently producing electricity
 - **Your computer or printed visuals** – show guests the website that allows you to track your solar panel production (if you don't have a web portal like this, any printed graphs or visuals of your solar system's production & energy savings, solar proposal or contract, and copies of your electric bills before and after going solar are great)
- When your tour is complete, bring guests back to the main gathering space.
 - Show guests the printed materials and solar resources we've sent you
 - Let guests know that you and the other solar homeowner(s) are happy to try to answer any questions they may have about going solar
 - a. *If you ever get asked a question you aren't sure how to answer, encourage the guest to email their question to getinvolved@solarunitedneighbors.org*
- Repeat the tour as many times as needed and continue chatting with attendees!

AFTER YOUR EVENT

1. CELEBRATE

Thank you for sharing your solar story, helping spread the word about solar, and adding your personal touch for homeowners in your area who are considering going solar! Your commitment to solar energy and desire to share solar with your community is truly admirable. And don't forget, by participating, your efforts are part of a nation-wide effort, amplifying your impact and the impacts of other solar homeowners like you in a huge way.

2. SEND SUN YOUR SIGN IN SHEETS AND PHOTOS

- Email any photos taken during your event to getinvolved@solarunitedneighbors.org
- Scan or take a photo of your sign in sheets and email them to getinvolved@solarunitedneighbors.org