

What You Need to Know Before Installing Solar

Does Ark Valley pay for energy produced by member solar generation?

Yes. Ark Valley offers parallel generation. This means when grid-interconnected solar systems generate more electricity than the member can utilize the instant it is produced, the excess electricity is fed back into the grid and used elsewhere on the distribution system. Ark Valley purchases the excess electricity at the rate of 150% of the wholesale monthly system average cost of energy per kilowatt-hour. The cost varies month to month, but in 2023 the average paid for parallel generation was 3.0¢/kWh.

This rate may be less than you would expect, but keep in mind that it is the energy portion of our wholesale rate, not the retail rate. Also, there are several components to the wholesale rate the cooperative pays, but the only component that is quantitatively reduced on our wholesale bill due to our member's interconnected solar is the amount of energy purchased. Energy is the least expensive part of our costs, but we do pay our members a 150% premium for that energy.

Does Ark Valley offer a net metering option?

No, but some companies that our members have worked with have provided misleading information by assuming net metering is offered or they use the wrong electric rate. These assumptions calculate a much better return on the member's solar investment than will actually be realized. Also, some members have been led to believe that they will no longer receive a bill from Ark Valley, which isn't the case.

What is the return on the solar investment for members?

The greatest payback members have is from the energy they consume from their solar array themselves, because it reduces the amount of energy purchased from Ark Valley. Another important component that is critical to reduce the payback period is the positioning of the solar arrays. In order to maximize solar production, they need to be positioned to optimize the late afternoon to early evening hours of sunlight.

Why is there a size limit on member solar?

Ark Valley has implemented the size limits to allow self-generation by members that will ensure a solar system is appropriately sized to meet our members' energy self-supply needs without causing load issues on the distribution system.