

# Assess Your Property's Renewable Energy Potential

FACT SHEET



BIOMASS



GEOTHERMAL



HYDROPOWER



SOLAR



WIND

To learn more about Focus on Energy, call 800.762.7077 or visit [focusonenergy.com](http://focusonenergy.com)



PHOTO COURTESY OF RON WROBLEWSKI

A site assessor uses a solar pathfinder to determine the effectiveness of solar energy at this home before the homeowner invests in a solar electric or solar hot water system. The inset photo to the right shows the Solar Pathfinder under ideal conditions.

A certified site assessor can help you determine whether your home or business property is a good location for a renewable energy system. Site assessors provide specific information about energy efficiency and how renewable energy systems (solar electric, wind and solar hot water) can be used at a home or business location to help meet your energy needs.

Focus on Energy helped create a unique Wisconsin program that trains and certifies professional renewable energy site assessors. These certified assessors will visit your home or business property and analyze its renewable energy potential, providing unbiased information on a variety of systems and their suitability to your property and energy needs. Site assessors are certified by the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA), which provides each assessor with training, testing and assessment oversight.

## PREPARING FOR A SITE ASSESSMENT

There are several things you can do to prepare for a site assessment. In order to fully analyze your site, the assessor may need to inspect the roof, attic, utility room, garage or basement. Making sure that these areas are accessible will facilitate the process.

The assessor will also need information about your energy use and may request to see records of past usage. This can usually be obtained from your utility. Having this information available will assist the assessor in accurately evaluating your energy needs.

## THE SITE ASSESSMENT

A certified assessor will visit your home or business property and analyze its renewable energy potential. The assessor will also answer specific questions you might have on renewable energy systems. Trained assessors

will evaluate the potential for installing a solar electric, solar hot water or wind system at your site. Some assessors can evaluate multiple technologies during your site assessment; keep this in mind when determining what assessor to hire.

During the site visit, the assessor will provide:

- A basic analysis of your energy needs
- Recommendations for energy efficiency to help lower your energy use and reduce the size of the renewable energy system you need
- An evaluation of the renewable energy resource at your site
- Recommendations for size and type of renewable energy system to meet your energy needs
- Estimated output of the renewable energy system, based on the resource estimate
- Information on the best place to site your system
- A general cost estimate for the system
- The next steps you need to take to make your system a reality

Additionally, the assessor will mail you a written report detailing this information.

#### **SITE ASSESSMENT BENEFITS**

A renewable energy site assessment conducted by a certified assessor provides an opportunity for you to talk with an experienced, objective third party about the characteristics of your property and lifestyle and learn about a variety of equipment and options. Certified site assessors are not selling renewable energy systems, nor will they promote specific equipment, vendors or installers during the site assessment. They will provide you with unbiased information that you can use when you begin talking to vendors about purchasing and installing a system at your home or business.

A site assessment is also a useful tool when organizations or municipalities are considering a project. The report can be used to present a summary of information and options to a group of decision makers for their approval, such as a board of directors or a budget committee.

#### **OTHER TYPES OF SITE ASSESSMENTS**

Some renewable energy system vendors and installers offer site assessments as part of their services. These businesses will charge you a separate fee for the assessment which they deduct from the cost of the system if you buy from them. This arrangement works well if you are comfortable evaluating the information given to you

by a vendor. Others will provide limited information about your site's potential for a renewable system as part of the bidding process, at no cost to you. Again, this arrangement could work if you are comfortable evaluating information given by a vendor during the selling process.

#### **COST OF A RENEWABLE ENERGY SITE ASSESSMENT**

Certified assessors establish their own fees for their services. On average, the full cost of an assessment is between \$200 and \$500. The cost varies depending on the number of technologies being assessed and the complexity of the system, as well as the assessor's travel costs. When you arrange for a site assessment, discuss your expectations with the assessor so that he or she can give you an accurate cost estimate.

Focus on Energy will pay 60 percent of the site assessment cost for solar electric, wind electric and solar water heating systems on homes and small businesses. The customer will pay the remaining 40 percent at the time of the assessment or when the report is delivered, depending on the site assessor. Customers interested in a larger commercial system should refer to the Focus on Energy Web site for assessment incentives and request forms.

#### **OBTAINING A RENEWABLE ENERGY SITE ASSESSMENT**

- Download a site assessment request form from [focusonenergy.com/renewableenergy](http://focusonenergy.com/renewableenergy) or call **800.762.7077** to have a copy mailed to you
- Complete the form and mail it to the address indicated or return by email
- A Focus on Energy representative will call you to discuss your site assessment needs, and determine if you qualify to receive the 60 percent incentive coupon from Focus on Energy
- Qualifying individuals will be sent a 60 percent incentive coupon and list of certified site assessors serving Wisconsin. Non-qualifying individuals may still request the list of assessors, and arrange for an assessment outside of the Focus Program
- Contact the assessor of your choice from the list and arrange a time for your site visit. Present the coupon to the assessor to receive 60 percent off the full price
- Your completed assessment will be mailed to you, usually within 10 working days
- Focus on Energy requires a site assessment when you apply for a wind energy reward, and site assessments are desirable for other projects seeking Focus incentives