Illinois Solar for All

Chicago Resident Saves with Solar Energy

Photos courtesy of Certasun LLC

Project Summary

When Lytese Dubois learned of the Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA) program following a community meeting at New Covenant Baptist Church on Chicago's South Side in May 2019, she was drawn to the savings that the program offers. Dubois' family became one of the program's first residential participants, and their solar project was installed on their rooftop in June 2020.

Dubois has lived in the bungalow she shares with her husband and one dependent in Chicago's Marynook neighborhood for 13 years. As a retiree, Dubois was looking for ways to save money and said that oftentimes finances can serve as a barrier to solar installation. "It's not an inexpensive project; this is major," she said.

That's where Illinois Solar for All (ILSFA) came in. This state-administered program provides incentives for solar development in income-eligible and environmental justice communities. Through the program, Dubois' household is guaranteed to see measurable savings on their electricity costs and to pay no upfront costs for their new rooftop solar project.

The Process

Dubois met with a representative of a solar company approved by ILSFA, Certasun LLC, who had initially presented at her church. Solar companies approved by ILSFA must meet high standards of quality workmanship, ethical marketing, and financial savings to ensure ILSFA's consumer protections are carried out.

Project Details

- Solar Company: **Certasun LLC**
- Total costs: **$0**
- Contract and warranty length: **15.5 years**
- Estimated savings on electricity costs:*
  o First year: **$987**
  o Over length of contract: **$17,018**

These savings are based on estimated electricity costs. Since electricity rates are expected to rise over time, the Dubois household's estimated savings increase over the course of their contract.

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In the time leading up to her installation in June 2020, the Certasun, LLC, representative needed to submit a project application for her home, verify her household's income eligibility and her home's site suitability, and meet the rest of ILSFA's rigorous consumer protections requirements.

Dubois described the process as hassle-free; she simply needed to provide the company with their previous ComEd bills and information to verify their income, and the representative took care of the rest, including inspecting her roof, attic, and electrical box to ensure her home was a good fit for solar panels.

The Results

The day their solar project was installed on their rooftop was exciting, Dubois said. "It was like we were in Hollywood because the neighbors were interested, and they pulled over to see what was going on," she recounted.

Their project is connected to the electrical grid and has started to convert the sunlight it absorbs into electricity. Dubois and her husband will receive credits on their ComEd bill for the electricity that their solar project produces, which will reduce the amount of electricity they need to buy from their electric supplier each month. They will not have to pay Certasun for any upfront or ongoing monthly costs associated with their solar project.

> **"Being a senior, I was interested in the savings, and there was a big savings component [from the program]. That's what motivated me."**

The project is estimated to save the Dubois household $82 per month for the first year of their contract. Since electricity costs are expected to rise over time, the solar project is estimated to save them over $17,018 over the course of their 15 and a half-year contract with Certasun. They'll receive those savings through credits on their ComEd bill for the electricity that their project produces.

Dubois has been telling her friends and neighbors about ILSFA to encourage them to take advantage of the savings and environmental benefits that the program offers. "I think this is a natural process -- we're getting [the energy] directly from the sun," she said.