



CITIZENS UTILITY BOARD

Fighting for Illinois Consumers

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CUB, CHICAGOLAND COUNTIES PARTNER TO OFFER “SOLAR SWITCH” PROGRAM TO SECURE ROOFTOP SOLAR DISCOUNTS, LOWER POWER BILLS FOR PARTICIPANTS

CHICAGO -The consumer watchdog Citizens Utility Board (CUB) is working with five Chicagoland counties, renewable energy advocates and solar professionals to offer a program that can help homeowners install solar panels at a significant discount and reduce their electric bills by hundreds of dollars, CUB announced Thursday.

The Solar Switch program is a partnership among Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake and Will Counties, along with the nonprofits CUB and the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA). The program is managed by iChoosr, a company that administers similar solar programs around the world.

Solar Switch is a “group-buy” program, which means it secures volume discounts for quality solar installations, based on how many residents of those five counties, along with residents of Kendall and McHenry counties, participate. The program selects installers through a competitive vetting process and then runs a reverse-auction to secure a low base-price.

“As a consumer advocate, CUB wants to educate consumers and empower them to cut their utility bills, and the Solar Switch program does both,” said Marina Minic, CUB’s Solar Programs Coordinator. “The program gives consumers an introduction to the benefits of solar power, and it then connects interested participants to qualified, vetted and affordable solar installers.”

Minic said legislation, such as Illinois’ 2021 Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) and the federal Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, offer multiple incentives that can cover around 60 percent of installation costs. That’s on top of volume discounts the Solar Switch program offers.

Once installed, solar panels have the potential to save customers hundreds of dollars a year on their electric bills.

Here’s how the Solar Switch program works:

- Chicagoland residents are invited to register for the program at solarswitch.com/Chicagoland. There, residents can fill out a questionnaire to see if their roof is suitable for solar. Registrants will also have access to free, educational webinars.
- In June, iChoosr organized a reverse auction—a process in which the traditional auction roles of buyer and seller are reversed. That means for each auction there is one buyer (a household or small business) and iChoosr invited qualified, pre-vetted solar providers to compete to offer the lowest bid and win the participant’s business.
- Registrants receive a personal recommendation, after which qualified installers will conduct remote and onsite roof assessments with those who accept an offer. The deadline to approve personal recommendations is August 21, 2024.
- Participants who review and approve their final quote will then schedule the installation. All installations will be completed by March 21, 2025.

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CUB, MREA and the counties have been involved in a similar group-buy program since 2019, helping more than 600 properties go solar, and educating more than 3,000 consumers about the science and benefits of solar.

Residents who participate are expected to save an average of about \$4,600 on a typical-sized solar installation, not counting the additional benefits of the federal and state tax credits. The Solar Switch program provides an excellent opportunity for Chicagoland residents to take advantage of these savings and make the switch to renewable energy. Register for free, educational webinars without obligation at solarswitch.com/Chicagoland. Consumers with questions should email hello@solarswitch.com.

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Solar Switch Chicagoland is a solar group-buy program offered to residential customers and small businesses through nonprofits [MREA](#) and [CUB](#), and in partnership with Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake and Will counties. The program is managed by [iChoosr](#), an independent solar group-buying specialist. Founded in 2008, iChoosr is active in five countries worldwide and its collective programs in energy and solar panels have helped more than 2.2 million people save more than \$760 million.

The MREA was incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit shortly after the first Energy Fair in 1990. MREA's mission is to promote renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable living through education and demonstration. To learn more, call 715-592-6595 or visit www.midwestrenew.org.

The Citizens Utility Board (CUB) is celebrating its 40th anniversary as Illinois' leading nonprofit utility watchdog group. Created by the Illinois Legislature, CUB opened its doors in 1984 to represent the interests of residential and small-business utility customers. Since then, CUB has saved consumers more than \$20 billion by helping to block rate hikes and secure refunds. For more information, call CUB's Consumer Hotline at 1-800-669-5556 or visit CUB's award-winning website, www.CitizensUtilityBoard.org.