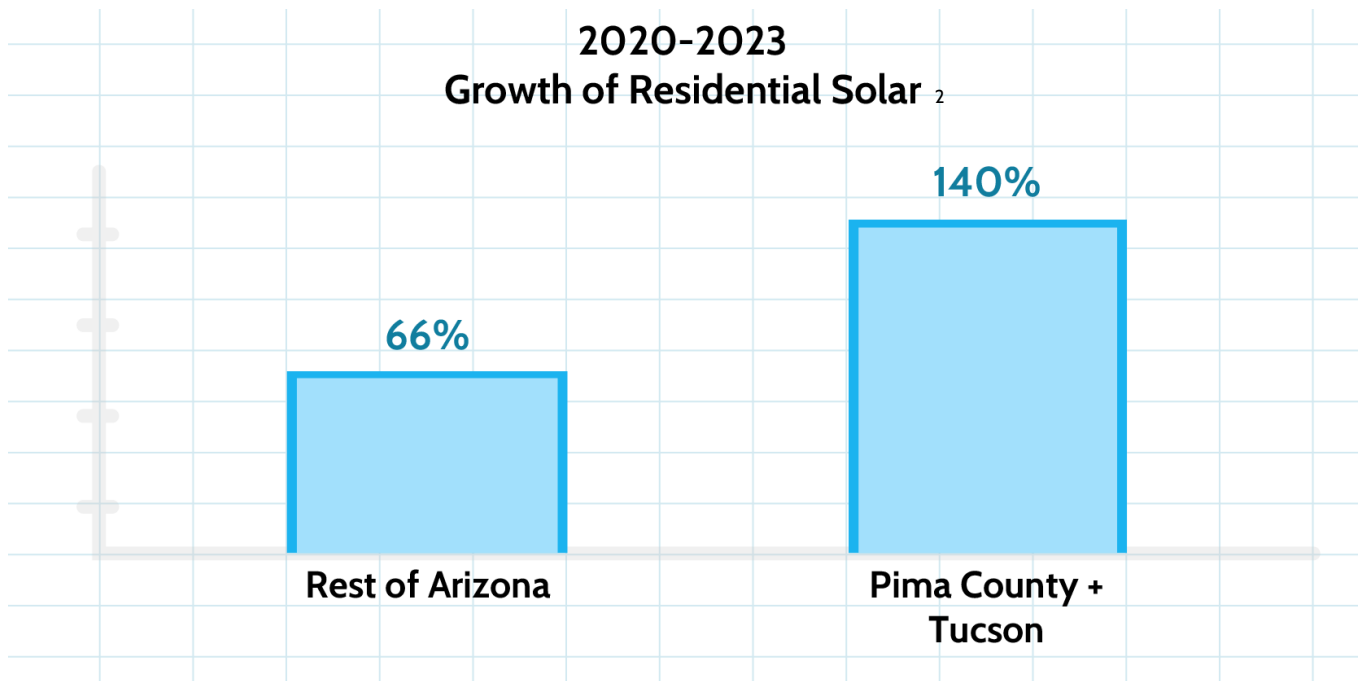


Automated Permitting Leads to More Rooftop Solar in Tucson and Pima County



In January 2021, Tucson and Pima County in southern Arizona automated their permitting for residential rooftop solar systems by deploying SolarAPP+ software. At the time, during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, rooftop solar permits would take weeks to acquire. Since switching to SolarAPP+, Tucson and Pima County now issue permits instantly. There's no back and forth during design review, and any changes that need to be made after an installer goes on site can be processed instantly without another trip to City Hall.

In the two years after Pima County and the city of Tucson switched to SolarAPP+, home solar installations increased at double the rate of the rest of the state.¹ From 2020 to 2023, solar installations in Arizona excluding Pima County and Tucson increased 66%. For Tucson and Pima County, installations increased 140%.



¹ Data compiled by Ohm Analytics

² Based on interconnection rates for Q4 2022 - Q3 2023

SolarAPP+ is a user-friendly software, developed by the U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Lab, that automates the process for permitting rooftop solar. By automating the permitting process, jurisdictions can reduce wait times and cut out costly red tape for homes going solar.

Pima County

At the County, SolarAPP+'s automated permitting has saved substantial staff time on planning and review while maintaining the highest building safety standards – SolarAPP+ performs over 150 separate checks on each rooftop solar and energy storage installation. Saving staff time also saves customer and installer time, translating into reduced costs and more capacity for plan reviewers to spend their time on other clean energy projects.

SolarAPP+ has been so successful that county officials are eager to see the software expanded to other clean energy home technology projects. They enthusiastically encourage other jurisdictions to automate their permitting using SolarAPP+

“SolarAPP+ is a one stop shop, you don’t have to wait for anything to be delivered, it’s delivered immediately there’s no going back and forth between plans examiner and contractor. It’s cut down on our time for planning reviews drastically.”

- Assistant Building Official for Pima County,
Rick Wilburg

Solar Installers

National and regional solar companies have seen a decrease in cost and more and faster installations in Pima County and Tucson since SolarAPP+'s automated permitting was implemented in 2021. With instant permitting and design review, installers are able to provide more certainty to their clients on when projects will be installed, reduce customer cancellations, save money on staff time and financing costs, and ultimately install more solar projects.

Many solar installers work across multiple jurisdictions outside of Pima County and Tucson. As SolarAPP+ is implemented in more places, installers can fully realize the cost benefits of automated permitting.

“With SolarAPP+'s automated permitting we spend less reviewer time – there’s less waiting. We’re able to schedule jobs more consistently and standardize across jurisdictions that use SolarAPP+.”

- Engineering Director/Owner of Net Zero Solar,
Louis Woofenden



Summary

Automated permitting in Tucson and Pima County has made rooftop solar installations faster and cheaper, saving costs for consumers and local governments. **In the two years after Pima County and Tucson switched to automated permitting using SolarAPP+, home solar installations increased at double the rate of the rest of the state.** Since SolarAPP+ was first implemented in 2020, over 240 jurisdictions have signed up for SolarAPP+ with more signing up every month.