


Appendix C: Contractor Selection Tips and Resources

Specialized technical knowledge and equipment are needed to properly install renewable energy systems. In addition, you may need information for, or assistance with, required permits and inspections, incentive programs and rebates, and tax credits. Therefore it is a good idea to take time to ensure that you select an experienced, licensed, and helpful contractor. Here are some tips and Resources for doing so:

Finding a Contractor

- Leafkey.com* is one online resource to find renewable energy system installers with verified credentials. OSER partnered with Leafkey.com in 2012 and 2013 to populate this database with contractors and eco-professionals serving Frederick County. You can search for a variety of green contractors or eco-experts within a certain radius of your zip code. You will find company descriptions, contact information, and credential and licensing information and verification.
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- You can also find contractors through the phone book, professional associations, and internet searches. Entering search strings, such as “find geothermal installers”, into your internet browser can direct you to directories of installers.
 - It is always a good idea to request site assessments and get estimates from more than one contractor.

Choosing a Contractor

As a consumer, do your due diligence to screen potential installers and find a suitably experienced contractor. Here are some questions and requests prospective installers should be prepared to handle:

Experience and Credentials:

- Is your company licensed or certified?

Having a valid plumber’s, electrician’s, and home improvement licenses are required for permits. Confirm licensing with Leafkey.com or the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, where you can also find out about any complaints against state-licensed contractors.

- How many years of experience does your company have with system installation and maintenance?

The more experience the better. Choose a company that has experience installing the type of system you want and servicing the applications you select.

- How many similar systems have you installed?
- Can you provide references from past customers with similar systems?
- Does the company have any pending or active judgments or liens against it?

In addition to the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation, the Better Business Bureau is another source of information.

Permits, Installation, Inspections, and Incentives:

- Do you handle acquisition of permits and scheduling of inspections? Do you have experience working with building code officials in Frederick County or, if applicable, utility representatives?
- How long will system planning and design take?
- When can installation start, and once started, how long will the project take?
- Will you hire subcontractors to work on portions of the projects? If so, what firms will be hired and what will they do?