



Ngerulmud florida microgrids

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Occupational therapist Sheila Longpré has lived and worked in two hurricane zones, Florida and Texas, and in Michigan, where winter storms can also impact life and safety. With increased reliance on home technology (and that technology being dependent upon electricity), older adults and those with medical conditions are even more vulnerable in power outages.

Citing durable medical equipment, refrigeration and smart home controls for lighting, appliances and other necessities, the new program director at Utah Tech University's occupational therapy curriculum warned, "This is probably even more problematic now than in previous years." (There are simply more households using these features.) Longpré cited this modern facet of resilience as an emerging practice area for occupational therapy.

Adults of all ages, health status, and state locations can be impacted by power outages, as became painfully evident in Texas' 2021 wintry outage that claimed 246 lives across 77 counties. That incident, plus the intensifying tempo of hurricanes, tornadoes and other disasters, is spurring soaring demand for home microgrids.

"Our inquiries for battery back-up have skyrocketed in the last 12 to 18 months. Five years ago, one in 20 customers would ask about this; today it's closer to one in three," declared Logan Boesch, a Tampa-based independent solar consultant. Dunnington has also seen demand increase by 25%, he reported.

Aside from a freak hurricane occurrence last year, Southern California's mild climate does not scream out for storm resilience. Demand in his region is being driven by the desire for energy independence and higher peak energy rates, Dunnington noted. "Across the country, homeowners are increasingly interested in microgrids due to a combination of factors that include rising energy costs, concerns about grid reliability, and a growing emphasis on sustainability and environmental responsibility," he added.

The biggest drivers in Boesch's Southeastern market are hurricanes and power outages, (which may become more common with rising temperatures straining utilities), but the Tampa consultant also cited unfavorable solar power buyback programs from local utilities. Looking across the country, he predicted, "As the grid continues to get older and fail more often, we will see utility prices continue to soar. As this happens people will be looking for other alternatives, along with the safety and security of producing your own power."

Microgrids are certainly popular among luxury builders and homeowners, but that popularity is spurring some economies of scale and competition that make them more feasible at more price points. "We have already seen massive price reductions in the cost of batteries," Boesch commented. His projects have ranged from \$20,000 up to \$200,000. Dunnington ranged his systems from \$10,000 to \$50,000 or higher, depending on whether the home already has solar panels installed.



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Government incentives can reduce some costs: "Right now, the federal government has a 30% tax credit available," Boesch noted, but he and Dunnington both suggest that homeowners check with their utilities for state and local incentives.

Longpr? added that there may be financial help available for clients with health issues through government and nonprofit agencies, and shared that their OT can help them find and access these programs.

Can a microgrid work on your property? If you don't have good sun access, space for solar panels, too much tree coverage or zoning issues, you might be thwarted in adding this capability. Condo owners have additional considerations with homeowner association rules.

Price can be a factor for some households, even with incentives. "Homes with extremely high energy demands may require larger and more expensive microgrid systems to meet their needs effectively," Dunnington pointed out.

When it comes to determining your capacity needs, online sizers aren't always reliable or up to date, Boesch noted, so it's best to consult with a pro for your particular needs. At a minimum, he recommends 20 kilowatts minimum if you're running an air conditioner. Dunnington suggested referring to the number of kilowatt hours you're currently consuming, (which should be available on your electric bill or through your provider), and sizing your system accordingly.

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